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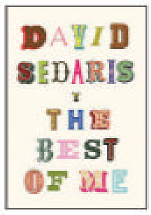

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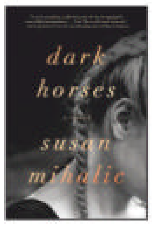

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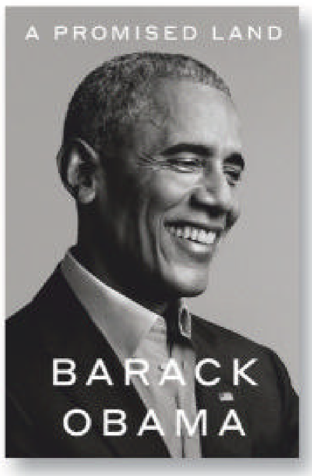
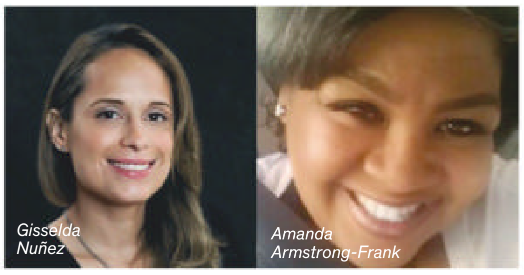
The Week in **Publishing**

Crown plans a three-million-copy first printing of the first volume of Barack Obama's presidential memoir, *A Promised Land*, which will publish globally on November 17.



HarperCollins named Gisselda Nuñez v-p of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and S&S named Amanda Armstrong-Frank director of workplace culture and diversity.


Gisselda Nuñez
Amanda Armstrong-Frank

The National Book Foundation announced the 2020 National Book Award longlists. The five finalists for each award will be named on October 6, and the winners will be announced on November 18.

Private equity firm Atlas Holdings has agreed to acquire LSC Communications, the nation's largest book printer, in a deal that is expected to close before the end of the year.

Bookstore sales dropped 24.6% in July compared to a year ago, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The July results were an improvement over steeper sales drops in recent months, but sales through the first seven months of 2020 were down 31.6%.

Online & On-Air

The Week Ahead

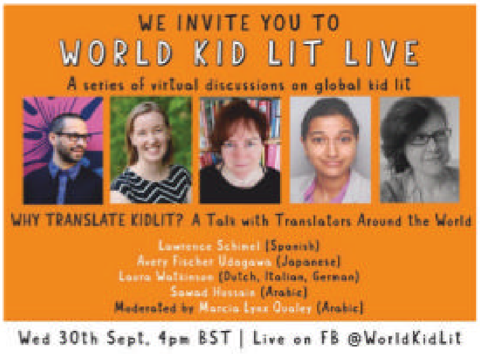
John Sargent is a very popular leader at Macmillan, where he's considered approachable and down to earth. So why is he leaving? *PW* senior editor Andrew Albanese explains.
publishersweekly.com/sargent

More to Come

PW senior news editor Calvin Reid interviews Jeff Trexler, the newly appointed interim executive director of the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, about the embattled organization's present and future.
publishersweekly.com/trexler

Children's Bookshelf

This September, the annual celebration of children's books in translation pivoted to an online format amid the pandemic.
publishersweekly.com/worldkidlit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Preparing for the Post-Sargent Era

Macmillan looks to move forward after splitting with its longtime CEO

Don Weisberg

Susan Winslow

The publishing industry is still absorbing the news that John Sargent, CEO of Macmillan Publishers and executive v-p of the Holtzbrinck Publishing Group, is leaving the company at the end of the year. Adding even more mystery to Sargent's surprise departure, the Holtzbrinck announcement said the popular CEO was departing due to "disagreements regarding the direction of Macmillan." Sources within Macmillan said the news, announced last Thursday, came as a complete shock to employees. Beginning January 1, Don Weisberg, president of Macmillan US Trade, will succeed Sargent as CEO of Macmillan Publishers, while Susan Winslow, general manager of Macmillan Learning, will head that division as president.

Sargent hired Weisberg, an industry veteran, in January 2016 to oversee Macmillan's U.S. trade operations after Sargent was named executive v-p of Holtzbrinck, where he oversees the company's higher education business while also running global trade. When Weisberg assumes his new duties, he will take over responsibility for Macmillan's global trade operations, with the exception of those in Germany.

Sargent is the most colorful leader among those at the Big Five trade publishers and has been active in industry matters for years. He is currently president of the Association of American Publishers after serving as treasurer. Along with Richard Sarnoff, then of Random House, he was the point person for publishers when they negotiated a settlement with Google in the Google Books lawsuit, though the agreement was later blocked by the courts. He has been a staunch advocate for free speech, and that was put on full display when the Trump administration attempted to block Macmillan's publication of *Fire and Fury* in January 2018. Responding to a cease and desist order from the White House, Sargent called the administration's moves "flagrantly unconstitutional"; *Fire and Fury* went on to become a huge bestseller.

Always a bit of a maverick, Sargent, who first joined Macmillan's St. Martin's Press in 1996, took the unusual step in June of appointing a 13-member trade management committee to set objectives for all publishers and divisions at Macmillan. In a letter announcing the committee, he wrote that he will "step back from day-to-day management to make room for new voices." The creation of the committee came two weeks after an industry-wide action protesting systematic racism, organized by five Macmillan employees. At the beginning of 2020, Macmillan became embroiled in controversy over the publication of *American Dirt*, with critics charging that the novel presented an inaccurate and stereotypical depiction of Mexico and Mexicans and of the immigrant experience. The publisher has taken a number of steps recently to improve the diversity of its workforce and list, including hiring LaToya Rose to fill the newly created role of v-p of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

In an interview with *PW,* Weisberg said Thursday was "definitely a difficult day" at Macmillan. Discussions with employees that day centered around the message that it is okay to acknowledge that Macmillan is losing "someone who has meant a lot to the company and meant a lot to many individuals, myself included," he added. Weisberg gave no indication of what Sargent's disagreement with Macmillan parent company Holtzbrinck was about.

"What's most important to John is the success Macmillan has had," Weisberg said. "He is very proud of the people here and all they have achieved."

Weisberg noted that, contrary to expectations in the wake of the pandemic, Macmillan is having a good year. Its sales have grown steadily over the past four years, grabbing market share through organic growth rather than through acquisitions, and he doesn't think that formula will change. "Macmillan is a steady company," he added.

Weisberg said Macmillan is in a good position for the fall and the holiday shopping season. He pointed to the success of Louise Penny's recent bestseller, *All the Devils Are Here*, and the company's solid upcoming list. And he remains confident about next year. "I am excited about our prospects for 2021," he noted. "I think we will do better than 2020, and 2020 has been a good year."

With Weisberg poised to expand his responsibilities beyond the U.S., he said at some point he will likely look for someone to take over some of his current duties. But for now, he's taking things one day at a time.

"John and I did talk about our future together at Macmillan," Weisberg said. "While talk of succession came up," he added, he was "surprised" by Thursday's announcement.

Winslow said she too was surprised by the news of Sargent's departure. "It's a big change," she conceded, calling Sargent a mentor. "John is just such an amazing person, and that's what is so great about working with him—his character, how committed he is to the world, and to people. John and I have spoken, and we hope to take those values forward with us."

With more than 30 years of experience in educational publishing, Winslow has served as general manager for the past three years at Macmillan Learning and has effectively been running the business while reporting to Sargent since Ken Michaels resigned as Macmillan Learning CEO in December 2019. And her ascension coincides with an intense period of change at the company, which began rolling out its new digital learning platform, Achieve, to strong reviews just as the Covid-19 crisis was forcing students across the country into remote learning.

The rush of new digital learners has since pushed Macmillan Learning into "overdrive," Winslow said, with personnel conducting about 10 times more training sessions than expected in a normal start to a school year, on everything from how to open an e-book in the platform to more complex instructional design questions. "It turns out that Achieve came at exactly the right time in the sense that it's a much more powerful digital tool, and easier to use than other tools," she added.

Though accelerated by the pandemic, the shift to digital resources has been underway at Macmillan Learning (and in the educational sector at large) for some time. In an interview with *PW* earlier this spring, Winslow acknowledged that "the sudden transition" to a virtual environment necessitated by Covid-19 has resulted in an unusual digital learning experience. "Typically instructors who teach virtually have time to plan out the alignment of their learning pathways ahead of time, and doing that makes an incredible difference. So while there are definitely more instructors now using digital, out of necessity, I think the full potential of digital learning hasn't yet been fully explored."

—Jim Milliot & Andrew Albanese

The Weekly Scorecard

Print Unit Sales Rose 7.2% in Early September

Unit sales of print books in the week ended Sept. 12, 2020, rose 7.2% over the comparable week in 2019, at outlets that report to NPD BookScan. Print sales in the juvenile nonfiction category jumped 26.4% over the week ended Sept. 14, 2019. The increase was driven by the strength of backlist books. The top 10 titles in the category sold about 83,000 units combined, a 30% increase over the top 10 titles last year at this time. *Big Preschool Workbook* was #1 on the category list, selling more than 18,000 copies. Last year at this time it was #2 on the list, with more than 8,000 copies sold. Stephenie Meyer's *Midnight Sun*, which sold more than 78,000 copies in the most recent week, helped to drive up sales in the YA fiction category by 42.5%. Though sales of Dav Pilkey's *Grime and Punishment (Dog Man #9)* have trailed off a bit, the title still sold more than 126,000 copies in the most recent week, leading to a 14.9% sales increase in the juvenile fiction category. Four new titles topped the adult nonfiction list, but sales in the category still slipped 0.2%. The top title in adult nonfiction was Michael Cohen's *Disloyal*, which sold more than 168,000 copies in its first week. In second place on the list was Jay Shetty's *Think Like a Monk,* which sold more than 67,000 copies. Four of the top five titles on the adult fiction list were new, led by J.D. Robb's *Shadows in Death*, which sold nearly 23,000 print copies in its first week. Overall, unit sales in the category rose 4.1% over 2019.

TOTAL SALES OF PRINT BOOKS (IN THOUSANDS)

	SEPT. 14, 2019	SEPT. 12, 2020	CHGE WEEK	CHGE YTD
Total	12,802	13,725	7.2%	6.0%

UNIT SALES OF PRINT BOOKS BY CATEGORY (IN THOUSANDS)

	SEPT. 14, 2019	SEPT. 12, 2020	CHGE WEEK	CHGE YTD
Adult Nonfiction	5,761	5,749	-0.2%	1.1%
Adult Fiction	2,502	2,605	4.1%	3.2%
Juvenile Nonfiction	1,068	1,350	26.4%	29.4%
Juvenile Fiction	2,861	3,288	14.9%	8.9%
Young Adult Fiction	341	504	42.5%	17.4%
Young Adult Nonfiction	53	59	10.3%	36.4%

UNIT SALES OF PRINT BOOKS BY FORMAT (IN THOUSANDS)

	SEPT. 14, 2019	SEPT. 12, 2020	CHGE WEEK	CHGE YTD
Hardcover	3,764	3,976	8.2%	5.4%
Trade Paperback	7,203	7,677	6.6%	8.0%
Mass Market Paperback	730	806	10.4%	-6.9%
Board Books	721	788	9.4%	4.8%

SOURCE: NPD BOOKSCAN AND PUBLISHERS WEEKLY. NPD'S U.S. CONSUMER MARKET PANEL COVERS APPROXIMATELY 80% OF THE PRINT BOOK MARKET AND CONTINUES TO GROW.

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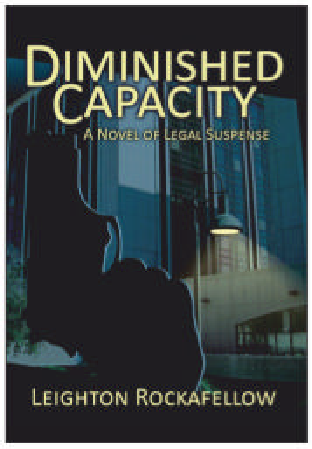
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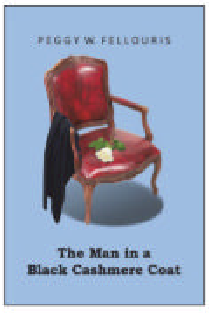
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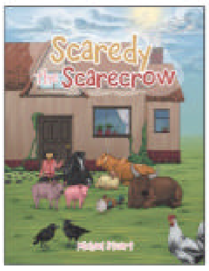
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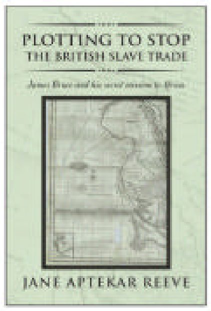
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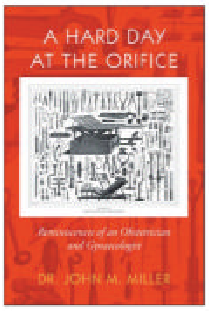
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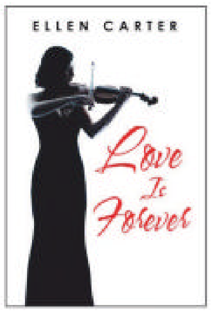
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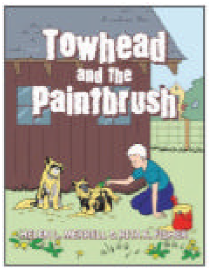
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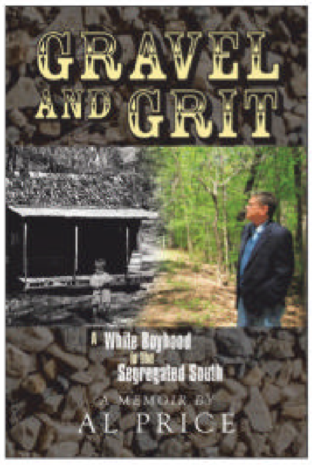
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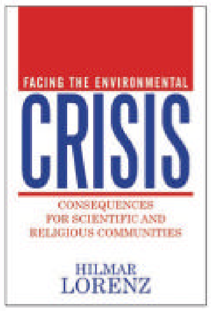
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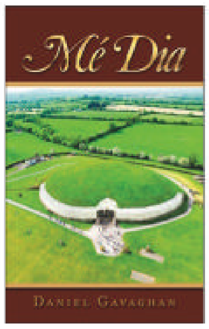
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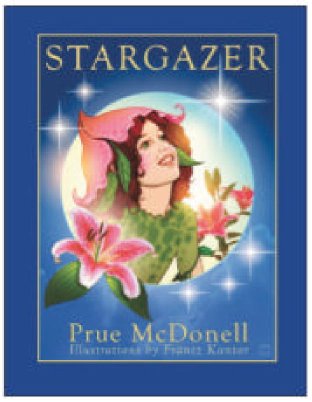
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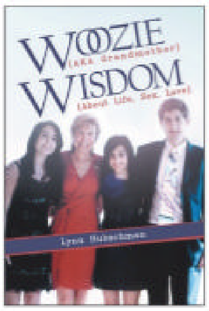
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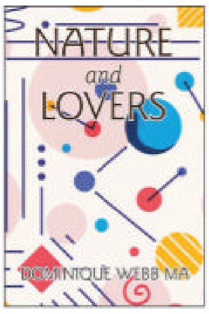
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DEALS

By Rachel Deahl

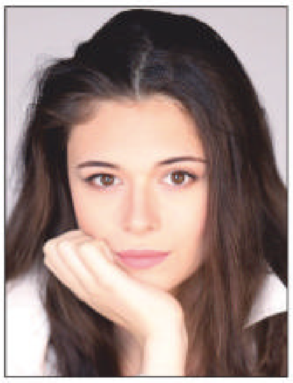
DEAL OF THE WEEK

May's Debut Draws Seven Figures

May

In a seven-figure deal, Custom House's **Katherine Nintzel** bought North American rights to *Wahala* by **Nikki May** in a two-book agreement. The publisher said the debut novel was acquired by Doubleday Books in the U.K. It was pitched "as *Sex and the City* meets *My Sister the Serial Killer*" and follows "three 30-something Anglo-Nigerian women in London whose lives are blown apart when a glamorous friend from their past reappears." The author, who was born in England and raised in Nigeria, was represented by **Catherine Cho** at London's Madeleine Milburn Literary Agency. May ran an ad agency in the U.K. before becoming a full-time writer.

Maines's Memoir Goes to Dial


Maines

Transgender activist and actress **Nicole Maines** sold a currently untitled memoir to Dial Press. **Caitlin McKenna** took world rights to the book from **Lauren MacLeod** and **Wendy Strothman** at the Strothman Agency. Maines's book, Dial said, aims "to correct some of the most insidious messaging absorbed by queer kids and all young women—from the idea that any one thing can (or should) ever really 'fix' you to wondering what's wrong with you when things don't always feel better—by providing an intimate look at her life and all the lessons she's learned along the way."

Morrow Buys Wedge's 'Slam'

Wedge

Journalist and true crime author **Dave Wedge** sold a book about longtime ATF agent Ken Croke's infiltration of an outlaw motorcycle gang to William Morrow. **Matt Harper** took North American rights to *Slam: Taking Down the Notorious Pagan Motorcycle Club* for six figures. **Peter Steinberg** at Foundry Literary + Media, who sold the book, said Croke spent two years infiltrating the Pagan Motorcycle Club (which was a rival of the Hells Angels), and that during this period he "led a heart-pounding, dangerous double life faking drug use, living with killers, even going to jail while remaining undercover." Wedge, a former investigative reporter at the *Boston Herald*, is the author of *Boston Strong: A City's Triumph over Tragedy* (which was adapted into the film *Patriots Day*).

Cervantes Closes Double at Auction

Cervantes

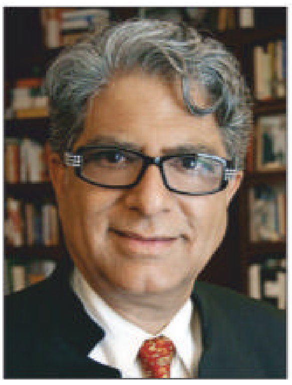
After a seven-house auction, Razorbill's **Julie Rosenberg** bought world English rights to **J.C. Cervantes**'s YA novel *Flirting with Fate* in a two-book deal. **Holly Root** at Root Literary represented Cervantes. The second book is a currently untitled novel. Root said *Flirting with Fate* is an L.A.-set contemporary romance that "introduces three hilarious, tight-knit sisters; the ghost of their dearly departed grandmother; and a fifth-century saint charged with aiding them in setting their fate right." The novel is set for 2021.

Newman Lands at Scribner

Newman

Former *Oprah.com* editor **Leigh Newman** sold two books to **Kathy Belden** at Scribner. The first, *Nobody Gets Out Alive*, is her debut short story collection and, Belden said, is set in Alaska. It features tales of "women living the kind of frontier life we associate with men." The second book, *The Survivalists*, is Newman's debut novel and follows a family who discover that a survivalist squatter has taken up residence near their remote cabin in Alaska. **Nicole Aragi** at Aragi Inc. represented Newman in the North American rights agreement.

Chopra Hits 'Peak' at Crown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Chopra

Deepak Chopra sold *Peak Living: The Hidden Path to Abundance* to **Diana Baroni** at Crown for a rumored seven figures. The world rights agreement was brokered by **Robert Gottlieb** at Trident Media Group. Gottlieb said the book "offers a step-by-step solution to stripping away unnatural feelings of self-doubt and fear, so we can instead embrace our natural state of abundance and tap into real happiness and wealth."

Women Authors Cope with the Pandemic

Covid-19 has created unique challenges for women. Preliminary research conducted by the journal *Nature Research* shows that women in academia are publishing fewer journal articles than they were before the outbreak. To get an idea of whether the same could be true for women authors in general, *PW* reached out to some who are also mothers to learn how the lockdowns have affected their work.

Marie Myung-Ok Lee

© ADRIANNE MATHIOWETZ

Prior to the pandemic, a study conducted by the Institute for Women's Policy Research found that women in the U.S. spend an average of two hours per day more than men on domestic responsibilities. This is due in part to the fact that women are more likely to have partners who are also employed, to be single parents, and to have elder care responsibilities. Additionally, the division of domestic labor often comes down to who earns more, and women are consistently paid less than men.

Vanessa Lillie

© BRITTANNY TAYLOR

This issue has been compounded by the pandemic. Though data on women's publishing rates in academia is clear-cut, gendered data on book publishing rates is harder to find. However, women in both fields face the same challenges: the extended shutdowns of schools and childcare facilities mean that parents, and especially mothers, have had to take on homeschooling and extra caregiving responsibilities. Hours of the day that were once devoted to work have been spent trying to keep children educated and entertained.

Alessandra Minello, a social demographer and professor at the University of Florence in Italy, studied publishing rates of women in academia and found that they typically submit fewer studies than their male counterparts. Minello works on a project called Smart Mama, for which she and another researcher recently interviewed 38 academics who are mothers in the U.S. and Italy. They found that these women had to prioritize childcare and teaching duties—both of which they are more likely than men to be responsible for—over publishing.

Minello fears that young mothers beginning their careers during the pandemic will struggle to obtain higher degrees and receive grants as a result of publishing less, which will affect advancement in their fields. She suspects that mothers who write trade books, though less likely to be responsible for teaching duties, will also slow their writing as they are forced to prioritize childcare.

Marcy Dermansky, author of *Twins* and *Bad Marie*, is a single mother to an 11-year-old daughter. Dermansky used to schedule her writing time when her daughter was in school, but that changed when schooling shifted to home. "It was just pretty much impossible to work, because she required a lot of help," she said. "I think it's always hard for mothers in writing with childcare, but the pandemic has made it exponentially harder."

Spending time helping her daughter with e-learning meant Dermansky hasn't been able to make much progress on her upcoming novel. "During those months, I didn't even try to work," she said.

Vanessa Lillie, author of *Little Voices* and *For the Best,* is currently working on her third book and has found that she is a month behind where she thought she'd be. Lillie has a five-year-old son and previously worked while he was at

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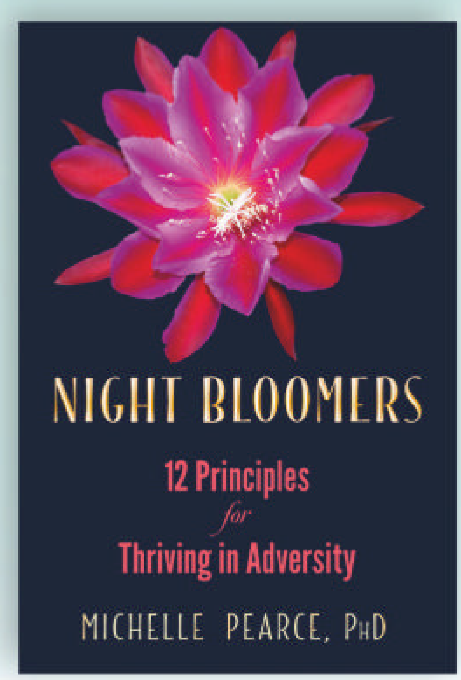

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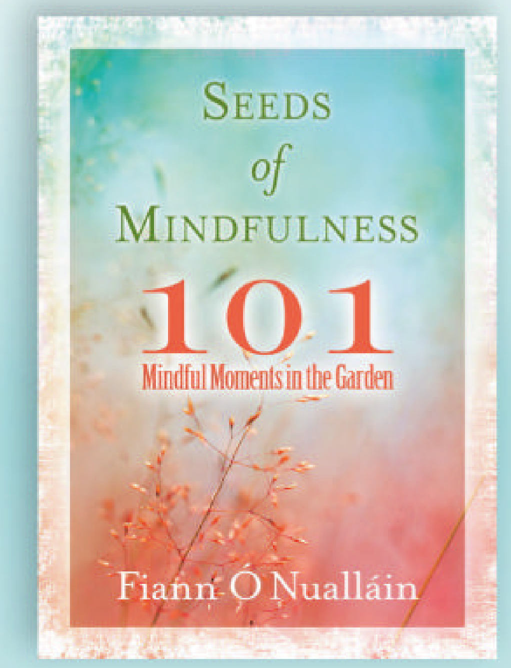
— **Michelle Bailey, MD**, author of *Parenting Your Stressed Child*



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school or soccer practice. Her husband, a lawyer, spends much of his days on Zoom calls, meaning Lillie is the only one available to care for their son most of the time. "Having children in the house is just a stream of constant disruption," she said. "It is really difficult to write on that deeper level I need when I am constantly interrupted."

Marie Myung-Ok Lee, author of *Somebody's Daughter* and *Necessary Roughness*, has faced unique challenges balancing revisions on her upcoming novels, *Finding My Voice* (Soho Press) and The Evening Hero (Simon & Schuster), with caring for her autistic son, who also has other learning disabilities and medical issues. Lee and her husband are schooling and caring for their son without any outside help in their small New York City apartment. Lee said she struggles to focus at home but has managed to get some work done at a friend's apartment. "I just have days where I feel like I am not in control of anything," she added.

Miranda Beverly-Whittemore, author of *Bittersweet* and *June*, has a four-year-old and an 11-year-old. She sold her latest book over the winter and initially thought she'd have plenty of time to complete it by the summer. However, when the pandemic struck, she found herself scrambling. She and her husband moved in with another family to share childcare responsibilities, and though she said the arrangement has provided her with a great advantage in comparison to other writer-mothers she knows, it has been difficult for her to meet her deadline. "I don't know how I am going to hand my book in in two weeks," she said in late August. "I guess I'm just not going to sleep."

Robin Romm, author of *The Tilt* and *The Mercy Papers*, also found writing in the pandemic to be nearly impossible. Caring for her 15-month-old and four-year-old has left her exhausted and unable to work. "It's not only that you don't have the physical time," she said, "but you don't really have the mental space to think expansive thoughts."

Romm's husband is also a writer, but he works full-time as a professor. Though he has been able to help with childcare, he had to attend meetings to prepare for a drastically changed fall semester. Romm's more flexible schedule has meant that she has to bear the brunt of childcare responsibilities.

The pandemic has highlighted a number of long-standing issues within publishing, and the challenges it has created for women authors appears to be yet another that needs to be addressed. **—Zoe Ettinger**

Zoe Ettinger is a freelance writer in New York City.

Call for Information

Feature: Mystery, Thriller, & True Crime
Issue: Nov. 17 **Deadline:** Sept. 29

For this feature, we'd like to hear about forthcoming true crime accounts, plus mysteries and thrillers that address topical issues (racial tensions, eco-disasters, etc.); thrillers with SF, fantasy, or horror elements; and SF, fantasy, and horror titles with detectives, including paranormal cozies. Pitches for standalones/series launches with other themes are welcome. Pub dates: December 2020 through May 2021. New titles only, please; no reprints. Email pitches to features@publishersweekly.com by September 29 and put "Call for Info: Mystery, Thriller, & True Crime" in the subject line.

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Patrick Turner, PW Co-owner, Dies at 71

Patrick Henry Turner, a book designer and art director for a number of book and magazine publishers and most recently co-owner of *Publishers Weekly*, died on September 9 from cancer. He was 71.

Born in Gaffney, S.C., Turner graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University in 1970 with a degree in commercial art. He began his career working for Harper & Row's Hagerstown, Md., division and later joined Johns Hopkins University Press in Baltimore.

In 1977, Turner took a job with Springer Verlag in Germany. He returned to the U.S. in 1979 to work at Academic Press. He then began a career in magazine publishing, working for PressCorps from 1995 to 2000 and Weider Communications from 2001 to 2004.

In 2005, Turner formed PHT Design, which he ran until 2010, at which point he and George Slowik Jr. formed PWxyz in order to acquire *Publishers Weekly* from Reed Business Information. Turner served as v-p of operations for *PW*, helping to set the future course of the book industry's trade publication. Turner and Slowik were life partners and were married in 2015.

Away from the office, Turner was an ardent traveler, visiting more than 70 countries. He was also a passionate theater and opera fan, and he loved spending time in his home on Fire Island, where he enjoyed demonstrating his gourmet cooking skills.

PW employees, especially longtime staffers, remember Turner for his warm nature and enthusiasm. Both made him a welcome presence in the office as he and Slowik led the turnaround of *PW*, which had gone through a difficult period in the last few years of Reed ownership.

In addition to Slowik, survivors include Turner's brother, Michael Richard Turner (Jenny) of Charlotte, N.C.; and his sister, Sally Turner Grindstaff (Jamie) of Gaffney. He is also survived by his nephew, Michael Allen Turner of Charlotte, and his nieces, Amy Turner Ludwig (Chad) of Wilmington, N.C., and Leala Patrice Grindstaff of New York City. In addition to his parents, Turner was preceded in death by his sister, Sandra Turner Matthews.

A memorial service will be held at a later date in New York City. Donations in Turner's memory can be made to the Tectonic Theater Project.

—Jim Milliot

In 2010,
Patrick Turner and his husband and
partner of 32 years, George Slowik Jr.,
purchased *Publishers Weekly*.

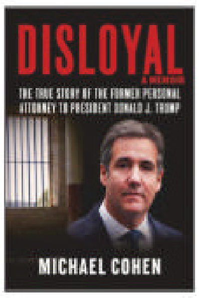
*Patrick Turner passed away on
September 9, 2020.*

The entire *Publishers Weekly* family
and so many more people who were touched
by his design talents, his graceful humanity,
and his wonderful sense of humor
mourn his loss.

Behind the Bestsellers SEPT. 6–12, 2020

By Carolyn Juris

INSIDE JOBS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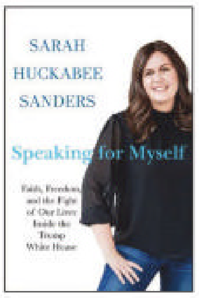
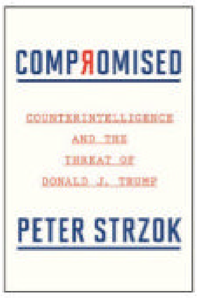
THE TRUE STORY OF THE FORMER PERSONAL ATTORNEY TO PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP
MICHAEL COHEN





The Trump administration figures prominently in three books debuting on our lists this week.

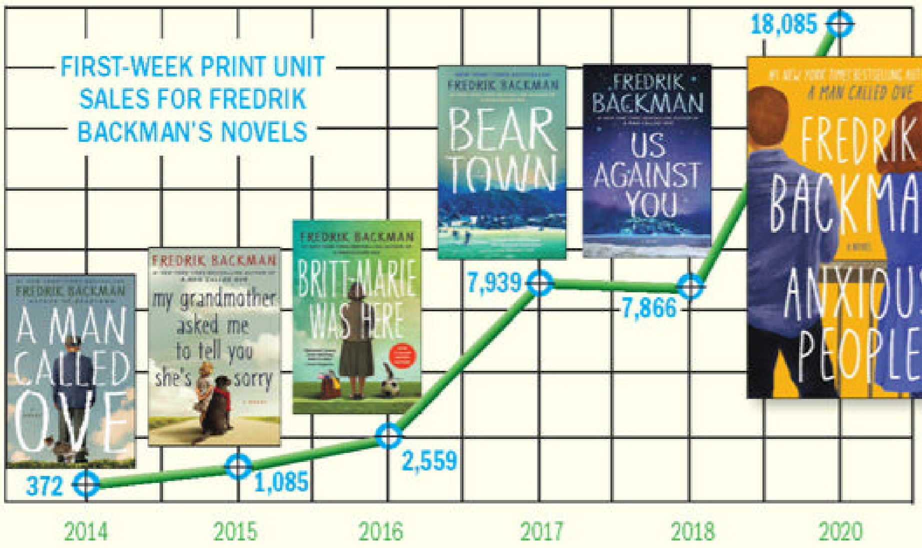
President Trump's former personal attorney Michael Cohen, currently serving a prison sentence for tax evasion and campaign finance violations, has the #1 book in the country with **Disloyal**. "I bore witness to the real man," he writes of his onetime boss, "in strip clubs, shady business meetings, and in the unguarded moments when he revealed who he really was: a cheat, a liar, a fraud, a bully, a racist, a predator, a con man."

Another insider, former White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders, lands at #8 in the country with **Speaking for Myself.** "President Trump—there are no words to describe how much you changed my life," she writes in the acknowledgments. "I don't care what the critics say—you will go down in history as a great president."

Compromised by Peter Strzok, #8 in hardcover nonfiction, takes a different tack, as described in our review: "Former FBI agent Strzok offers an inside look at investigations into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server as secretary of state, and links between Donald Trump's campaign and Russian efforts to interfere in the 2016 presidential election."

Backman in Action

Fredrik Backman's 2014 debut, *A Man Called Ove*, had a modest start in hardcover and went on to sell 1.7 million copies in trade paper. Subsequent titles have followed similar trajectories—respectable hardcover sales, blockbuster trade paper sales—but with his latest, **Anxious People**, Backman appears to have broken part of that mold. It debuts at #4 in hardcover fiction, and in one week sold about half the number of print copies that each of his first three books have sold in hardcover since release.



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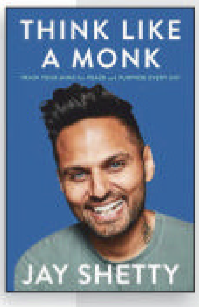

THINK LIKE A MONK
Jay Shetty
#2 Hardcover Nonfiction, #4 overall
"Shetty, host of the *On Purpose* podcast and a former Vedic monk, debuts with a peppy and persuasive work that guides readers through a process of personal growth," our review said. His "take on Hindu spirituality delivers practical wisdom for anyone looking to create better daily habits."

Jenna Bush Hager
Everything Beautiful in Its Time

EVERYTHING BEAUTIFUL IN ITS TIME
Jenna Bush Hager
#4 Hardcover Nonfiction, #6 overall
"This endearing memoir brings readers deep into the heart of a family that many may feel they already know well," our review said of this book by a daughter of the 43rd U.S. president and granddaughter of the 41st, now a cohost of *Today with Hoda and Jenna*. "Bush's fans will delight in these intimate, funny remembrances."

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Fruits of His Labor

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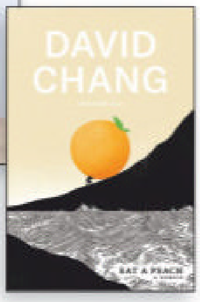

Eat a Peach by David Chang, a "self-effacing, heart-on-sleeve memoir," per our starred review, is #14 in hardcover nonfiction. "Chang writes about the sweaty tension of his manic episodes and his dark depression," the review said. "In the book's most heartfelt section, [he] rhapsodizes about the egalitarian Asian dining ethos he wanted to import to the West and even allows himself a rare pat on the back for his influence." The James Beard Award–winning Momofuku restaurateur and *Lucky Peach* magazine cofounder also stars in the culinary culture program *Ugly Delicious* on Netflix.

TOP 10 OVERALL

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	UNITS
1	**Disloyal**	Michael Cohen	Skyhorse	163,536
2	**Grime and Punishment** (Dog Man #9)	Dav Pilkey	Graphix	126,049
3	**Midnight Sun**	Stephenie Meyer	Little, Brown	78,164
4	**Think Like a Monk**	Jay Shetty	Simon & Schuster	67,080
5	**Killing Crazy Horse**	O'Reilly/Dugard	Holt	37,457
6	**Everything Beautiful in Its Time**	Jenna Bush Hager	Morrow	33,786
7	**Live Free or Die**	Sean Hannity	Threshold	31,454
8	**Speaking for Myself**	Sarah Huckabee Sanders	St. Martin's	24,582
9	**Shadows in Death**	J.D. Robb	St. Martin's	22,996
10	**The Harbinger II**	Jonathan Cahn	Frontline	22,885

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Adult Bestsellers | SEPT. 6–12, 2020

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Hardcover Frontlist Fiction

RANK	LW	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	UNITS
1	–	**Shadows in Death**	J.D. Robb	St. Martin's	9781250207234	22,996
2	2	**The Harbinger II**	Jonathan Cahn	Frontline	9781629998916	22,885
3	–	**One by One**	Ruth Ware	Scout	9781501188817	19,583
4	–	**Anxious People**	Fredrik Backman	Atria	9781501160837	18,085
5	1	**All the Devils Are Here**	Louise Penny	Minotaur	9781250145239	14,329
6	6	**The Vanishing Half**	Brit Bennett	Riverhead	9780525536291	11,362
7	3	**The Lying Life of Adults**	Elena Ferrante	Europa	9781609455910	11,214
8	4	**Transcendent Kingdom**	Yaa Gyasi	Knopf	9780525658184	9,585
9	7	**Thick as Thieves**	Sandra Brown	Grand Central	9781538751947	8,135
10	8	**Royal**	Danielle Steel	Delacorte	9780399179655	6,896
11	12	**The Guest List**	Lucy Foley	Morrow	9780062868930	6,873
12	11	**Squeeze Me**	Carl Hiaasen	Knopf	9781524733452	6,618
13	14	**The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse**	Charlie Mackesy	HarperOne	9780062976581	6,482
14	13	**1st Case**	Patterson/Tebbetts	Little, Brown	9780316418188	5,704
15	15	**American Dirt**	Jeanine Cummins	Flatiron	9781250209764	5,523
16	16	**If It Bleeds**	Stephen King	Scribner	9781982137977	4,371
17	–	**The Darkest Evening**	Ann Cleeves	Minotaur	9781250204509	3,983
18	19	**Camino Winds**	John Grisham	Doubleday	9780385545938	3,966
19	5	**Star Wars: Thrawn Ascendancy: Chaos Rising**	Timothy Zahn	Del Rey	9780593157688	3,935
20	17	**28 Summers**	Elin Hilderbrand	Little, Brown	9780316420044	3,920

Hardcover Frontlist Nonfiction

RANK	LW	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	UNITS
1	–	**Disloyal**	Michael Cohen	Skyhorse	9781510764699	163,536
2	–	**Think Like a Monk**	Jay Shetty	Simon & Schuster	9781982134488	67,080
3	–	**Killing Crazy Horse**	O'Reilly/Dugard	Holt	9781627797047	37,457
4	–	**Everything Beautiful in Its Time**	Jenna Bush Hager	Morrow	9780062960627	33,786
5	4	**Live Free or Die**	Sean Hannity	Threshold	9781982149970	31,454
6	–	**Speaking for Myself**	Sarah Huckabee Sanders	St. Martin's	9781250271334	24,582
7	1	**Melania and Me**	Stephanie Winston Wolkoff	Gallery	9781982151249	22,297
8	–	**Compromised**	Peter Strzok	HMH	9780358237068	21,656
9	3	**Caste**	Isabel Wilkerson	Random House	9780593230251	20,991
10	2	**Untamed**	Glennon Doyle	Dial	9781984801258	18,208
11	6	**Too Much and Never Enough**	Mary L. Trump	Simon & Schuster	9781982141462	14,980
12	15	**Hoax**	Brian Stelter	One Signal	9781982142445	14,542
13	16	**Blitz**	David Horowitz	Humanix	9781630061388	10,303
14	–	**Eat a Peach**	David Chang	Clarkson Potter	9781524759216	10,102
15	19	**The Ideal Planner**	Emma Chamberlain	Gallery	9781982141912	8,360
16	–	**The Gifts of Imperfection** (10th anniversary ed.)	Brené Brown	Random House	9780593133583	8,068
17	8	**His Truth Is Marching On**	Jon Meacham	Random House	9781984855022	7,661
18	7	**Donald Trump v. the United States**	Michael S. Schmidt	Random House	9781984854667	7,352
19	13	**Magnolia Table, Vol. 2**	Joanna Gaines	Morrow	9780062820181	7,084
20	5	**How to Lead**	David M. Rubenstein	Simon & Schuster	9781982132156	6,856

LW: rank last week

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Mass Market Frontlist

RANK	LW	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	UNITS
1	–	Twisted Twenty-Six	Janet Evanovich	Putnam	9780399180217	11,190
2	1	The Family Lawyer	James Patterson	Grand Central	9781538751589	8,014
3	2	Bloody Genius	John Sandford	Putnam	9780525536635	6,836
4	3	Truth and Justice	Fern Michaels	Zebra	9781420146066	6,343
5	4	One Good Deed	David Baldacci	Grand Central	9781538750544	6,246
6	–	Scene of the Crime	Sharon Dunn	Love Inspired Suspense	9781335403025	5,254
7	11	Wildflower Ridge	Sherryl Woods	Mira	9780778388067	4,478
8	6	Lethal Agent, Volume 18	Vince Flynn	Pocket	9781501190636	4,434
9	9	Child's Play	Danielle Steel	Dell	9780399179525	4,382
10	10	Outfox	Sandra Brown	Grand Central	9781455572205	4,381
11	8	Finding You Again	Debbie Macomber	Mira	9780778388173	4,192
12	5	Bullet for a Stranger	William W. Johnstone	Pinnacle	9780786044368	4,119
13	14	The Cowboy's Lady & Small-Town Nanny	Debbie Macomber	Harlequin	9781335979933	3,992
14	15	Paranoid	Lisa Jackson	Zebra	9781420136111	3,943
15	16	Golden in Death: An Eve Dallas Novel	J. D. Robb	St. Martin's	9781250207227	3,877
16	13	The Last Odyssey	James Rollins	Morrow	9780062892928	3,811
17	7	Bury the Hatchet	William W. Johnstone	Pinnacle	9780786045877	3,685
18	17	Welcome Home	Nora Roberts	St. Martin's	9781250781024	3,578
19	12	Someone to Romance	Mary Balogh	Berkley	9781984802392	3,471
20	–	Covert Cover-Up	Elizabeth Goddard	Love Inspired Suspense	9781335403032	3,280

Trade Paperback Frontlist

RANK	LW	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	UNITS
1	4	The Institute	Stephen King	Gallery	9781982110581	10,342
2	2	The Brothers of Auschwitz	Malka Adler	One More Chapter	9780008398439	8,437
3	–	Cilka's Journey	Heather Morris	Griffin	9781250265692	7,979
4	–	The Psychology of Money	Morgan Housel	Harriman House	9780857197689	7,973
5	–	Peace	Becky Thompson	WaterBrook	9780525652694	7,649
6	3	The Midwife Murders	James Patterson	Grand Central	9781538718872	7,519
7	6	So You Want to Talk About Race	Ijeoma Oluo	Seal	9781580058827	5,369
8	5	Publication Manual of the APA	–	APA	9781433832161	5,105
9	15	Killer Instinct	Patterson/Roughan	Grand Central	9781538731628	5,013
10	8	The Testaments	Margaret Atwood	Anchor	9780525562627	4,770
11	1	The Distance Learning Playbook (Grades K-12)	Douglas Fisher	Corwin	9781071828922	4,766
12	12	Rand McNally 2021 Large Scale Road Atlas	–	Rand McNally	9780528022449	4,201
13	9	The New Jim Crow	Michelle Alexander	New Press	9781620971932	4,036
14	21	Circe	Madeline Miller	Back Bay	9780316556323	3,677
15	–	The Stone Wall	Beverly Lewis	Bethany House	9780764233081	3,488
16	16	Fire & Blood	Martin/Wheatley	Bantam	9781524796303	3,446
17	14	A Woman of No Importance	Sonia Purnell	Penguin Books	9780735225312	3,396
18	–	Pop Manga Cute and Creepy Coloring Book	Camilla d'Errico	Watson-Guptill	9781984858498	3,110
19	22	Heaven, My Home	Attica Locke	Mulholland	9780316363396	3,095
20	–	Our Malady	Timothy Snyder	Crown	9780593238899	3,043

LW: rank last week

Children's Bestsellers | SEPT. 6–12, 2020

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Children's Frontlist Fiction

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	UNITS
1	**Grime and Punishment** (Dog Man #9)	Dav Pilkey	Graphix	9781338535624	126,049
2	**Midnight Sun**	Stephenie Meyer	Little, Brown	9780316707046	78,164
3	**Rowley Jefferson's Awesome Friendly Adventure**	Jeff Kinney	Amulet	9781419749094	19,818
4	**Logan Likes Mary Anne!** (The Baby-Sitters Club Graphic Novel #8)	Martin/Farina	Graphix	9781338304541	15,896
5	**The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes**	Suzanne Collins	Scholastic Press	9781338635171	9,060
6	**The One and Only Bob**	Katherine Applegate	HarperCollins	9780062991317	7,022
7	**Fetch-22** (Dog Man #8)	Dav Pilkey	Graphix	9781338323214	6,245
8	**Captain Underpants and the Revolting Revenge...**	Dav Pilkey	Scholastic	9781338347234	5,713
9	**Punching the Air**	Zoboi/Salaam	HC/Balzer + Bray	9780062996480	5,303
10	**Wrecking Ball** (Diary of a Wimpy Kid #14)	Jeff Kinney	Amulet	9781419739033	4,626
11	**The Silver Eyes** (Five Nights at Freddy's Graphic Novel #1)	Scott Cawthon	Scholastic	9781338298482	3,959
12	**Bunny Call** (Five Nights at Freddy's: Fazbear Frights #5)	Scott Cawthon	Scholastic	9781338576047	3,702
13	**The Lost Book of the White** (The Eldest Curses #2)	Cassandra Clare	S&S/McElderry	9781481495127	3,527
14	**The Bad Guys in Dawn of the Underlord** (The Bad Guys #11)	Aaron Blabey	Scholastic	9781338329483	3,298
15	**Karen's Roller Skates** (Baby-Sitters Little Sister Graphic Novel #2)	Martin/Farina	Graphix	9781338356144	3,183
16	**I Survived the California Wildfires, 2018**	Lauren Tarshis	Scholastic	9781338317442	2,870
17	**June's Wild Flight** (The Last Kids on Earth #6)	Max Brallier	Viking	9780593117187	2,661
18	**Teen Titans: Beast Boy**	Kami Garcia	DC Comics	9781401287191	2,645
19	**Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire**	Rowling/Kay	Scholastic	9780545791427	2,639
20	**Into the Pit** (Five Nights at Freddy's: Fazbear Frights #1)	Scott Cawthon	Scholastic	9781338576016	2,436
21	**The Princess in Black and the Bathtime Battle**	Hale/Hale/Pham	Candlewick	9781536215755	2,370
22	**Majesty** (American Royals #2)	Katharine McGee	Random House	9781984830210	2,307
23	**Max Einstein Saves the Future**	Patterson/Grabenstein	LB/Patterson	9780316488211	2,242
24	**Tales from a Not-So-Best Friend Forever** (Dork Diaries #14)	Rachel Renée Russell	Aladdin	9781534427204	2,192
25	**Ghost Boys**	Jewell Parker Rhodes	Little, Brown	9780316262262	2,191

Children's Picture Books

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	UNITS
1	**The Very Hungry Caterpillar**	Eric Carle	Philomel	9780399226908	11,289
2	**Little Blue Truck's Halloween**	Schertle/McElmurry	HMH	9780544772533	11,125
3	**You're My Little Pumpkin Pie**	Natalie Marshall	Silver Dolphin	9781684124343	10,587
4	**Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?**	Martin/Carle	Holt	9780805047905	10,450
5	**I Promise**	James/Mata	HarperCollins	9780062971067	9,745
6	**Chicka Chicka Boom Boom**	Martin/Archambault/Ehlert	Little Simon	9781442450707	8,858
7	**Goodnight Moon**	Brown/Hurd	HarperFestival	9780694003617	8,811
8	**Our Class Is a Family**	Olsen/Sonke	Shannon Olsen	9780578629094	8,522
9	**I Love You to the Moon and Back**	Hepworth/Warnes	Tiger Tales	9781589255517	8,418
10	**Pete the Cat: Trick or Pete**	James Dean	HarperFestival	9780062198709	8,291
11	**Giraffes Can't Dance**	Andreae/Parker-Rees	Cartwheel	9780545392556	7,647
12	**The Wonky Donkey**	Smith/Cowley	Scholastic	9780545261241	7,585
13	**If Animals Kissed Good Night**	Paul/Walker	FSG	9780374300210	7,515
14	**First 100 Words**	Roger Priddy	Priddy	9780312510787	7,484
15	**How to Catch a Monster**	Wallace/Elkerton	Sourcebooks	9781492648949	6,692
16	**Wild Symphony**	Brown/Batori	Rodale Kids	9780593123843	6,623
17	**Where the Wild Things Are**	Maurice Sendak	HarperCollins	9780064431781	6,574
18	**Love You Forever**	Robert Munsch	Firefly	9780920668375	6,417
19	**Room on the Broom**	Donaldson/Scheffler	Puffin	9780142501122	6,341
20	**Boo**	Von Feder/Zermeno	Cottage Door	9781680521894	5,933
21	**How to Catch a Mermaid**	Wallace/Elkerton	Sourcebooks	9781492662471	5,752
22	**Biscuit Visits the Pumpkin Patch**	Capucilli/Schories	HarperFestival	9780060094669	5,525
23	**Where's Spot?**	Eric Hill	Warne	9780399240461	5,418
24	**The Going to Bed Book**	Sandra Boynton	Little Simon	9780671449025	5,389
25	**The Pigeon HAS to Go to School!**	Mo Willems	Hyperion	9781368046459	5,195

Category Bestsellers | AUG. 2–29, 2020

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Biography & Memoir

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	FORMAT
1	**Too Much and Never Enough**	Mary L. Trump	Simon & Schuster	9781982141462	Hardcover
2	**Untamed**	Glennon Doyle	Dial	9781984801258	Hardcover
3	**Just Mercy**	Bryan Stevenson	One World	9780812984965	Trade Paperback
4	**Finding Freedom**	Scobie/Durand	Dey Street	9780063046108	Hardcover
5	**His Truth Is Marching On**	Jon Meacham	Random House	9781984855022	Hardcover
6	**The Answer Is...**	Alex Trebek	Simon & Schuster	9781982157999	Hardcover
7	**Live in Love**	Lauren Akins	Ballantine	9780593129043	Hardcover
8	**Becoming**	Michelle Obama	Crown	9781524763138	Hardcover
9	**Night**	Elie Wiesel	Hill and Wang	9780374500016	Trade Paperback
10	**Between the World and Me**	Ta-Nehisi Coates	One World	9780812993547	Hardcover

Food & Drink

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	FORMAT
1	**Magnolia Table, Vol. 2**	Joanna Gaines	Morrow	9780062820181	Hardcover
2	**Magnolia Table, Vol. 1**	Joanna Gaines	Morrow	9780062820150	Hardcover
3	**Chiquis Keto**	Chiquis Rivera	Atria	9781982133726	Trade Paperback
4	**Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat**	Samin Nosrat	Simon & Schuster	9781476753836	Hardcover
5	**The Complete Ketogenic Diet for Beginners**	Amy Ramos	Rockridge	9781623158088	Trade Paperback
6	**Air Fryer Cookbook**	Jenson William	Jenson William	9781674844466	Trade Paperback
7	**The Step-by-Step Instant Pot Cookbook**	Jeffrey Eisner	Voracious	9780316460835	Trade Paperback
8	**Complete Book of Home Preserving**	Kingry/Devine	Robert Rose	9780778801313	Trade Paperback
9	**New World Sourdough**	Bryan Ford	Quarry	9781631598708	Hardcover
10	**Cravings**	Chrissy Teigen	Clarkson Potter	9781101903919	Hardcover

History & Political Science

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	FORMAT
1	**Live Free or Die**	Sean Hannity	Threshold	9781982149970	Hardcover
2	**How to Be an Antiracist**	Ibram X. Kendi	One World	9780525509288	Hardcover
3	**Blitz**	David Horowitz	Humanix	9781630061388	Hardcover
4	**The Color of Law**	Richard Rothstein	Liveright	9781631494536	Trade Paperback
5	**How to Destroy America in Three Easy Steps**	Ben Shapiro	Broadside	9780063001879	Hardcover
6	**It Was All a Lie**	Stuart Stevens	Knopf	9780525658450	Hardcover
7	**On Tyranny**	Timothy Snyder	Crown/Duggan	9780804190114	Trade Paperback
8	**Stamped from the Beginning**	Ibram X. Kendi	Bold Type	9781568585987	Trade Paperback
9	**The Splendid and the Vile**	Erik Larson	Crown	9780385348713	Hardcover
10	**Hoax**	Brian Stelter	One Signal	9781982142445	Hardcover

Comics

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	FORMAT
1	**The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse**	Charlie Mackesy	HarperOne	9780062976581	Hardcover
2	**The Umbrella Academy, Vol. 1: Apocalypse Suite**	Gerard Way	Dark Horse	9781593079789	Trade Paperback
3	**The Umbrella Academy, Vol. 2: Dallas**	Way/Ba	Dark Horse	9781595823458	Trade Paperback
4	**The Umbrella Academy, Vol. 3: Hotel Oblivion**	Way/Ba	Dark Horse	9781506711423	Trade Paperback
5	**My Hero Academia, Vol. 1**	Kohei Horikoshi	Viz	9781421582696	Trade Paperback
6	**My Hero Academia, Vol. 2**	Kohei Horikoshi	Viz	9781421582702	Trade Paperback
7	**Demon Slayer: Kimetsu No Yaiba, Vol. 15**	Koyoharu Gotouge	Viz	9781974714780	Trade Paperback
8	**My Hero Academia, Vol. 24**	Kohei Horikoshi	Viz	9781974711208	Trade Paperback
9	**Critical Role: Vox Machina Origins, Vol. II**	Matthew Mercer et al.	Dark Horse	9781506714493	Trade Paperback
10	**The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess, Vol. 7**	Akira Himekawa	Viz	9781974715336	Trade Paperback

Apple Books Bestsellers | SEPT. 7–13, 2020

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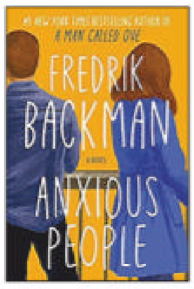
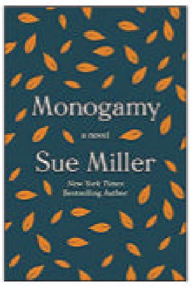
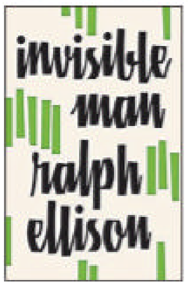
Fiction & Literature

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN
1	Dune	Frank Herbert	Ace	9781101658055
2	Anxious People	Fredrik Backman	Atria	9781501160851
3	The Girls in the Garden	Lisa Jewell	Atria	9781476792231
4	Next Year in Havana	Chanel Cleeton	Berkley	9780399586699
5	The Vanishing Half	Brit Bennett	Riverhead	9780525536970
6	Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone	J.K. Rowling	Pottermore	9781781105849
7	The Beach Club	Elin Hilderbrand	St. Martin's	9781429905459
8	Where the Crawdads Sing	Delia Owens	Putnam	9780735219113
9	28 Summers	Elin Hilderbrand	Little, Brown	9780316420051
10	Monogamy	Sue Miller	Harper	9780062969675
11	Invisible Man	Ralph Ellison	Vintage	9780307743992
12	The Black Swan of Paris	Karen Robards	Mira	9781488055331
13	American Dirt	Jeanine Cummins	Flatiron	9781250209771
14	The Lying Life of Adults	Elena Ferrante	Europa	9781609455927
15	The Kitchen God's Wife	Amy Tan	Penguin Books	9781101007150
16	Tidelands	Philippa Gregory	Atria	9781501187179
17	The Housekeeper	Natalie Barelli	Furphies	9780648225980
18	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	J.K. Rowling	Pottermore	9781781105856
19	Two Widows	Laura Wolfe	Bookouture	9781800190047
20	One Plus One	Jojo Moyes	Penguin Books	9780698152007

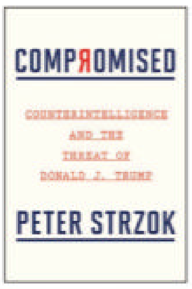


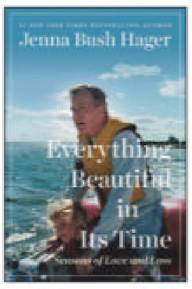




Biography & Memoir

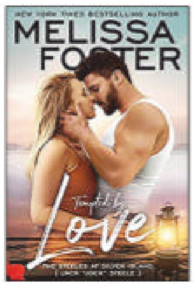
RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN
1	Compromised	Peter Strzok	HMH	9780358237532
2	Melania and Me	Stephanie Winston Wolkoff	Gallery	9781982151263
3	Untamed	Glennon Doyle	Dial	9781984801265
4	Everything Beautiful in Its Time	Jenna Bush Hager	Morrow	9780062960641
5	Secret Daughter	June Cross	Penguin Books	9781101201695
6	Can't Hurt Me	David Goggins	Lioncrest	9781544512266
7	Eat a Peach	David Chang	Clarkson Potter	9781524759223
8	The Dynasty	Jeff Benedict	Avid Reader	9781982134129
9	Too Much and Never Enough	Mary L. Trump	Simon & Schuster	9781982141486
10	Educated	Tara Westover	Random House	9780399590511

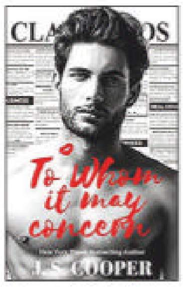




Romance

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN
1	Tempted by Love	Melissa Foster	World Literary	–
2	To Whom It May Concern	J.S. Cooper	J.S. Cooper	9781393053705
3	Stuffed	Alexa Riley	Alexa Riley	9781393810315
4	Penthouse Prince	Kendall Ryan	Kendall Ryan	–
5	The Only One	Melissa Ellen	Honey Bee	9781733698948
6	Say It Ain't So	Lani Lynn Vale	Lani Lynn Vale	–
7	Birdsong	Sebastian Faulks	Vintage	9780307820389
8	A Family to Keep	Susan Gable	Infinite Daydreams	9780996799249
9	The Anti-Boyfriend	Penelope Ward	Penelope Ward	9781951045364
10	Dreams of Willow House	Susanne O'Leary	Bookouture	9781786818621





Nothomb, Seethaler on Top in France, Germany

Of the 511 books published as part of France's annual *rentrée littéraire* fall book bonanza, Amélie Nothomb's *The Aerostats*, about a young woman who teaches a dyslexic boy to enjoy reading, is the #1 fiction bestseller. Emmanuel Carrère's *Yoga*, a novel about depression and terrorism, is #2.

In Germany, Americans dominated the bestseller list, with Stephenie Meyer and Delia Owens taking the #2 and #3 spots on the fiction list and Mary Trump at the #1 spot on the nonfiction list. That said, it was Austrian Robert Seethaler who had the top-selling fiction title with his novel *The Last Movement,* about the final journey of composer Gustav Mahler. Seethaler, who has had several global bestsellers, has been published by FSG in the U.S.

Dutch comedian Arjen Lubach's irreverent account of his global travels, *Jammer*, was on top of the combined bestseller list in the Netherlands. It was followed by *The Discomfort of Evening,* a novel by Marieke Lucas Rijneveld, which won the International Booker Prize earlier this month. The book was just published by Graywolf Press in the U.S. **—Ed Nawotka**

France

Fiction

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT
1	**Les aérostats** *(The Aerostats)*	Amélie Nothomb	Albin Michel
2	**Yoga** *(Yoga)*	Emmanuel Carrère	P.O.L.
3	**L'énigme de la chambre 622** *(The Enigma in Room 622)*	Joël Dicker	Ed. de Fallois

Nonfiction

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT
1	**Le temps des tempêtes** *(The Time of Storms)*	Nicolas Sarkozy	Editions de l'Observatoire
2	**Une farouche liberté** *(A Fierce Freedom)*	Gisèle Halimi, Annick Cojean	Grasset, Paris
3	**Y a-t-il une erreur qu'ils n'ont pas commise ?** *(Is There a Mistake They Didn't Commit?)*	Christian Perronne	Albin Michel

For the week ended Aug. 30; used by arrangement with *GFK/Livres Hebdo*

Germany

Fiction

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT
1	**Der letzte Satz** *(The Last Movement)*	Robert Seethaler	Hanser Berlin
2	**Biss zur Mitternachtssonne** *(Midnight Sun)*	Stephenie Meyer	Carlsen
3	**Der Gesang der Flusskrebse** *(Where the Crawdads Sing)*	Delia Owens	hanserblau

Nonfiction

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT
1	**Zu viel und nie genug** *(Too Much and Never Enough)*	Mary L. Trump	Heyne
2	**Künstliche Intelligenz und der Sinn des Lebens** *(Artificial Intelligence and the Meaning of Life)*	Richard David Precht	Goldmann
3	**Trotzdem** *(Nevertheless)*	Ferdinand Schirach, Alexander Kluge	Luchterhand

For the week ended Aug.30; used by arrangement with *Buchreport*

Netherlands

Fiction & Nonfiction Combined

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT
1	**Stoorzender** *(Jammer)*	Arjen Lubach	Podium
2	**De avond is ongemak** *(The Discomfort of Evening)*	Marieke Lucas Rijneveld	Atlas Contact
3	**Het zoutpad** *(The Salt Path)*	Raynor Winn	Balans
4	**De meeste mensen deugen** *(The Banality of Good)*	Rutger Bregman	De Correspondent
5	**Familieopstelling** *(Family Constellation)*	Kluun	Lebowski
6	**De jongen, de mol, de vos en het paard** *(The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse)*	Charlie Mackesy	KokBoekencentrum

For the week ended Aug. 30; used by arrangement with *CPNB*

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C.L. Grossman

Religious Children's Publishing Continues to Grow

New books for young readers emphasize resilient faith in the face of hardship

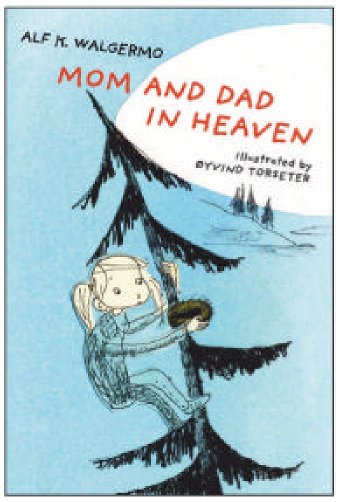
Faith-based children's book publishers, which stand on stories of inspiration, joy, and adventure that are threaded with spiritual and biblical ideas, have had steadily rising sales, from four million copies sold in 2014 to 6.8 million copies in 2019, according to NPD BookScan. This year, critters bounce through board books, anthropomorphizing lessons in kindness and compassion, while titles for tots teach the ABCs of Christian creeds and middle grade books confront issues of identity and sexuality. Additionally, biography, history, mystery, and fantasy titles—often in graphic formats—show real and imagined protagonists' adventurous, yet faithful, lives.

Facing hard challenges

Somber notes are appearing in the fall and spring lists, with stories that can offer wisdom and comfort during the inescapable challenges of 2020—a pandemic raging, protests in the streets, schools upended, and playmates kept socially distant. And more such books are on the way, publishers say.

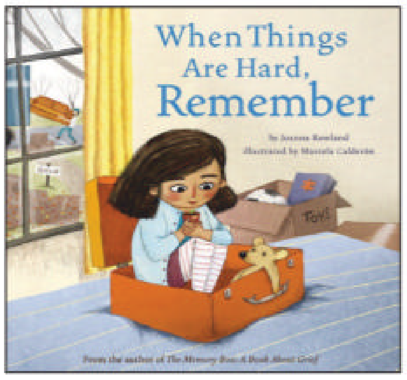
"It's our responsibility to address these topics," says Megan Dobson, recently named v-p and publisher for Zonderkidz. "We want to speak to children with voices that allow them to open up and deal with anxiety, grief, fear, anger—everything kids are feeling—in age-appropriate ways. We can highlight thankfulness and gratitude for the helpers. And we can show characters who speak up for what is right."

Books that deal with eternal emotions and questions will always meet the needs of the moment, says Nancy Bryan, v-p for editorial at Church Publishing. While visiting Norway earlier this year, she spotted a 10-year-old book by acclaimed Norwegian author Alf K. Walgermo. It told the story of an orphaned child asking questions about God and faith and finally finding spiritual solace. Bryan acquired the rights, hired a translator, and retained award-winning illustrator Øyvind Torseter to produce *Mom and Dad in Heaven* (Morehouse, Nov.). "It's a genuinely human, beautifully written book" that will find an audience as the country struggles with the coronavirus outbreak, she says.



Paraclete Press author John Gray's new book, *Sweet Polly Petals*, illustrated by Shanna Brickell (Oct.), zeroes in on an urgent topic as the poor economy continues to push up evictions. It's a fairy tale about Polly, a little girl who is given four magic wishes and uses them to help as many homeless people as she can. Gray plans to donate a portion of sales to shelters.

At Beaming Books, editorial director Jill Braithwaite says, "Our books are all geared toward helping kids thrive socially, emotionally, and spiritually through life's challenges. Many of the books find a new level of resonance in difficult times. We see a lot of demand for books that deal with resilience."


When Things Are Hard, Remember

Beaming's spring titles include *When Things Are Hard, Remember,* a picture book about a little girl whose family must move, by Joanna Rowland (*The Memory Box: A Book About Grief*) and illustrated by Marcela Calderón. The girl brings a seed from the tree by her old home and replants it in her new front yard in a tale of change, uprooting, and new growth. She and her father have browner skin than the clearly white children who join her in friendship. Inclusion matters, says Braithwaite. "We publish books with people of color that are about living life and all it entails. We are very interested in books that fight against racism and white supremacy, and we actively seek more creators of color for future lists."

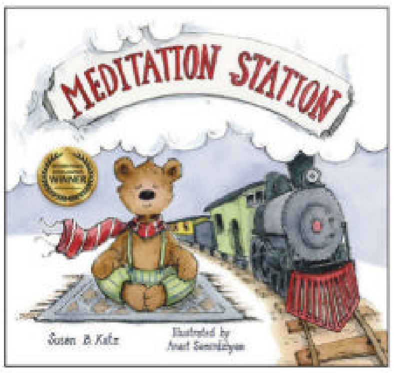
Quelling anxiety and fear

Several upcoming books are aimed at helping children find a sense of spiritual calm and security. *The Bright Light That Defeats the Super Scary Darkness* (B&H, Oct.) by theologian Dan DeWitt, illustrated by Rea Zhai, tells children that Jesus, light of the world, defeats the evils they fear.

It's followed in April by more books from B&H addressing faith and hope in the face of anxiety, such as *What Do I Do with Worry* by Christian counselors Josh and Christi Straub with illustrator Jane Butler. It tells the story of a little girl of color who struggles with a move to a new neighborhood until new friends show her the biblical way to deal with emotions.

In April, Tyndale will publish *What Do You Say to a Dragon,* by Lexi Young Peck with illustrator Wendy Leach, which demonstrates for children "how to face fear head on, express their emotions, and use their imaginations to change the power dynamic of anxiety," according to Linda Howard, associate publisher for kids and youth. She sees it as a title that can cross over to secular audiences while offering an "underlying Christian worldview."

Three forthcoming titles focus on meditation. Coming from Shambhala's Bala Kids division in November is *Meditation Station* by Susan Katz with illustrator Anait Semirdzhyan, which introduces an imaginary place where kids can learn to "manage our busy minds, difficult feelings, and frustrations by staying with our breath and in our body," according to publisher Ivan Bercholz. Bala Kids will also release *Sit with Me: Meditation for Kids in Seven Easy Steps* (Dec.) by Carolyn Kanjuro with illustrations by Nan Lawson. "There is so much to learn from the wisdom of age-old traditions" when it's presented in ways accessible to children, says Bercholz.

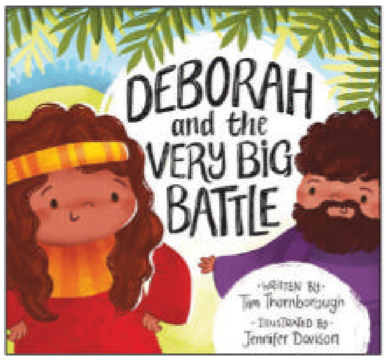

MEDITATION STATION
WINNER
Susan B. Katz
Illustrated by Anait Semirdzhyan

Healing Breath: A Guided Meditation for the Planet by William Meyer with illustrations by Brittany Jacobs (New World Library, Aug.) is intended to help young readers foster their connections with the earth and all who live on it. This is only the second children's book ever released by NWL, following the success of *Big Breath* by the same creators last year, says executive editor Jason Gardner.

Focusing on inclusion

Though calls for social, racial, and economic justice are in the spotlight now, children's publishers in recent years have been quietly intent on assuring diversity and inclusion in texts and illustrations.

"We want to be biblical, accessible, and relevant," says Tim Thornborough, founder and executive v-p of The Good Book Company. The company, which began adding children's titles five years ago, saw 2017's *God's Very Good Idea*,by African American author Trillia Newbell, sell "a year's worth of stock in a week this year," according to Thornborough.


DEBORAH and the VERY BIG BATTLE
Written by Tim Thornborough
Illustrated by Jennifer Davison

In the company's Very Best Bible Stories series, which produces about two books a year, "we never illustrated Jesus the same

THE GIVING MANGER

Discover a new Christmas tradition with this family activity that helps children focus on giving rather than getting during the holidays.

The box set includes:

- *The Giving Manger* picture book
- Wooden manger
- Bundle of straw
- Baby Jesus

Available October 13, 2020
9781546034223
$39.99 U.S. / $49.99 CAN.

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Written by ALLISON HOTTINGER
Illustrated by EMILY KING
A CHRISTMAS FAMILY TRADITION
HARDCOVER BOOK
MANGER
STRAW
BABY JESUS
FILL THE MANGER WITH ACTS OF KINDNESS THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON!

Love Remembers

I LOVE YOU TO THE STARS

WHEN GRANDMA FORGETS, LOVE REMEMBERS

by CRYSTAL BOWMAN and DOUGLAS GROOTHUIS

illustrated by ROBERT SAUBER

Then one day when I came home from school, a police car was in my driveway. Grandma had taken Sunny for a walk, and they got lost. A nice police officer brought them home. Good thing Sunny had our address on his dog tag. "Sunny went the wrong way!" said Grandma as she shook her head.

The next day, Grandma put my jeans in my mom's closet, and she put Sunny's ball in my sock drawer.

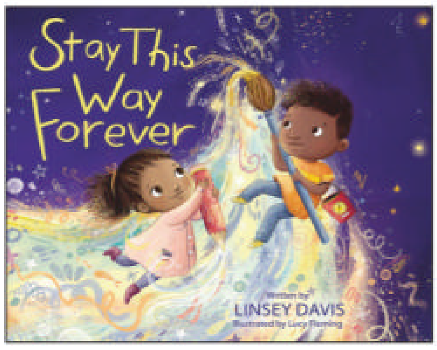
978-0-8254-4647-4
Coming September 2020

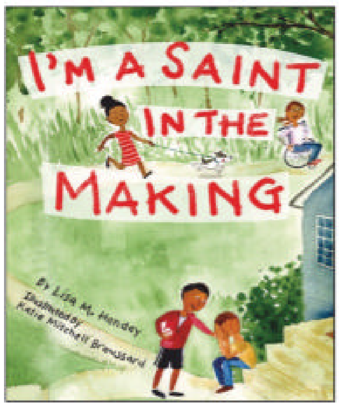
Designed to help children–and parents–find their way through the confusing world of a loved one developing dementia, *I Love You to the Stars* is full of thoughtful, child-friendly language from award-winning author Crystal Bowman. Also includes beautiful, hand-painted illustrations throughout and helpful discussion questions at the end.

KREGEL CHILDREN'S

800-733-2607 | Kregel.com

way in each book," he says. "We don't want to inadvertently declare, 'This is what Jesus looked like.' " Coming in November are two titles for the series written by Thornborough and illustrated by Jennifer Davison: *Deborah and the Very Big Battle* and *Moses and the Very Big Rescue*.



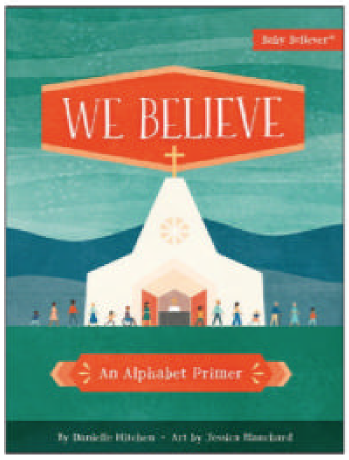

I'M A SAINT IN THE MAKING
By Lisa M. Hendey
Illustrated by Katie Mitchell Broussard

Other forthcoming titles focus on inclusion. *Stay This Way Forever* (Zonderkidz, Mar.), by ABC News anchor Linsey Davis and illustrated by Lucy Fleming, portrays the innocence and wonder of childhood for children of all backgrounds. *Different: A Great Thing to Be!* (WaterBrook, June) by Heather Avis, illustrated by Sarah Mensinga, is a rhyming book showing children how to recognize beauty and delight in people with learning disabilities or physical challenges. *I'm a Saint in the Making* (Paraclete, Oct.) by Lisa Hendey, illustrated by Katie Broussard, presents inspiring examples of saints from around the world with the message that no one must be perfect to care for others and share their gifts.

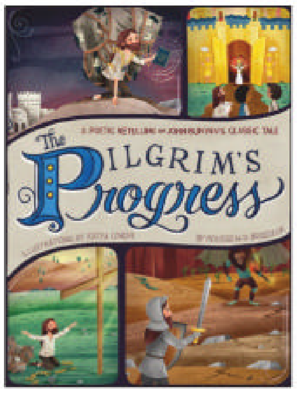
Love Gave (Harvest House, Oct.) by Quina Aragon, assistant editor at The Gospel Coalition website, with illustrations by Rommel Ruiz, is a Gospel story of forgiveness, told by a Black author. It features child characters of many backgrounds and portrays Jesus as a "dark-skinned, dark-eyed man from the Middle East," says Kyle Hatfield, the acquisitions editor for Harvest House children and family titles. Hatfield, who is Asian American, says he wants to see books that "can raise up a generation of people who value each other."

Teaching Christian theology to tots

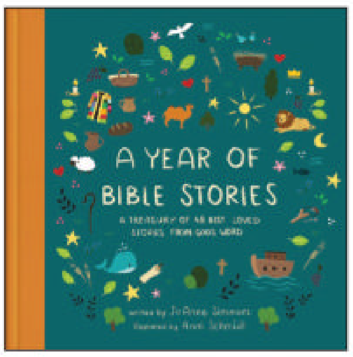
Hatfield, previously a children's pastor before beginning his publishing career, says, "We feel it is never too early to teach children important doctrines of the faith. We can infuse these central beliefs into their DNA so, when they get older, it will seem as if they have always known this."



The publisher's Baby Believer board book series' newest addition, *We Believe* (out now) by Danielle Hitchen with illustrator Jessica Blanchard is the Apostles' Creed cast as an alphabet primer ("E: Everlasting Life. We Believe in the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting"). Harvest is also releasing *A Tale of Two Kings* by Gloria Furman with illustrator Natalia Moore (Mar.), which draws connections between Adam and Jesus.

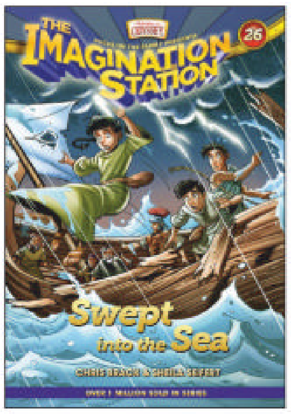


A new title by Sally Lloyd Jones and illustrated by Jago, *Near* (Zonderkidz, Jan. 2021), is a toddler's introduction to Psalm 139's message that "God is always near and knows us and loves us even when we may not see it." (Lloyd Jones's touchstone book, *The Jesus Storybook Bible*, will be issued as a keepsake edition, titled *A Christmas Collection*, in October.) Harvest House presents an adaptation of the John Bunyan classic *The Pilgrim's Progress* (out now) with "kid-friendly verse" by Rousseaux Brasseur, who once turned the tome into a stage musical, with illustrations by Katya Longhi.



Some Christian kids' titles are pegged to the church calendar. In October, Barbour will publish *A Year of Bible Stories* by JoAnn Simmons and illustrated by Anita Schmidt. Paraclete aims to help homeschooling parents with lessons for early elementary school-aged children on the key moments in the church year with *Breathe: A Child's Guide to Ascension, Pentecost, and the Growing Time* by Laura Alary, illustrated by Cathrin Peterslund (Apr. 2021). And 1517 Media's *Lift-the-Flap Easter Stories* (Feb. 2021), by Andrew J. DeYoung and Naomi Krueger with illustrator Megan Higgins, "invites the youngest children to celebrate Jesus's life after death from the resurrection to the ascension," according to the publisher.

Christian history and theology for older children



For bigger kids, two publishers offer time-traveling takes on biblical tales. In October, Tyndale House's Focus on the Family imprint will publish the latest entry in its Imagination Station series, which takes two cousins back in time to experience biblical moments. They are shipwrecked with Paul in *Swept into the Sea* by Shiela Seifert and Chris Brack, illustrated by Sergio Cariello. *Imagine... The Tower Rising* by Matt Koceich, illustrated by Simon Mendez, drops a modern girl into biblical times to witness the fiasco at the Tower of Babel (Barbour, Nov.).

Other engaging formats are forthcoming, too. Tyndale House imprint Kingstone Comics will publish *The Epic Bible: God's Story from Eden to Eternity* (Oct.), a graphic novel retelling of the Bible's central story by DC and Marvel comic artists, and *Seekers: An Interactive Family Adventure in Following Jesus* (NavPress, Oct.), written and illustrated by C.S. Fritz, which includes puzzles, art projects, and an escape room–like mystery. Eerdmans, too, offers an activity-oriented title: *Saint Spotting (Or How to Read a Church)*

continued on p. 26

God Made Us Just Right
By Allia Zobel Nolan
Illustrated by Katy Hudson

978-0-8254-4663-4
Coming February 2021

From award-winning, best-selling children's author **Allia Zobel Nolan** comes a charming new book to reassure kids that we're all different by design.

"God made you perfect, little one. And God is never wrong!"

KREGEL CHILDREN'S

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“The Christian Standard Bible provides a clear trustworthy translation of the Holy Scriptures in a style that the reader can clearly hear the voice of God in print speaking to their soul.”

- **Tony Evans**, Senior Pastor, Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship, Dallas, TX

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SEVEN ARROWS BIBLE
KIDS BIBLE

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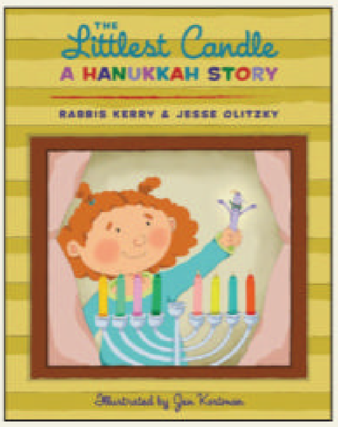
Jewish Kids’ Books Pick Up Steam

Today’s Jewish child will find a bonanza of titles in upcoming months with stories of celebration, adventure, history, and mystery that highlight Jewish values. The number of titles aimed at Jewish children has been expanding steadily in recent years, and two new Jewish children’s publishers have launched this year, both promising characters from Ashkenazi (Eastern European ancestry) and Sephardi (Mediterranean and North African ancestry) cultures and people from around the globe.

Joni Sussman, publisher of Kar-Ben, a division of Lerner focused exclusively on Jewish children’s books, attributes the growth in Jewish children’s book publishing to PJ Library, a philanthropy launched in 2005 to provide free books for children in Jewish households and libraries in the U.S. and abroad. So far, it has mailed more than 12 million books to 620,000 subscribers.



Lili Rosenstreich, founder of Kalaniot, a new imprint of Endless Mountains Publishing, is hoping for a copublishing deal with PJ Library. Kalaniot (Hebrew for “wild poppies”) launched this month with its first title, the Hanukkah book *The Littlest Candle*, written by rabbis Kerry and Jesse Olitzky and illustrated by Jen Kostman. Little Flicker, the small candle with a big heart, “personifies what it means to have humility and a moral compass at a time when many of us big-time adults aren’t doing so great,” Rosenstreich says. Three more titles are planned for spring 2021.

Brianna Caplan Sayres launched Intergalactic Afikoman in February with the Passover tale *Asteroid Goldberg: Passover in Outer Space*, followed by *Such a Library*—a spoof on an old Yiddish folk tale featuring a librarian named Miss Understood. On her upcoming calendar are *DIJ—Do It Jewish: Use Your Jewish Creativity!* (Dec.), written by Barbara Bietz and illustrated by Daria Grinevich; *Fighting Climate Change Is a Mitzvah*, focusing on young Jewish activists, by Sayres (Mar.); and *Bubbe & Bart’s Matzoh Ball Mayhem* (Aug.), starring a grandmother, her puppy, and some flying food, by Bonnie Grubman with illustrations by Deborah Melmon.

Intergalactic Afikoman (a reference to the piece of matzah traditionally hidden during Passover seders for children to find) strives for what its mission statement calls “out-of-this-world Jewish books for today’s Jewish kids.” Slated for publication in 2022, *Frankenstein’s Matzoh* by K. Marcus features a nonbinary descendent of the fictional Victor Frankenstein who, “through immigration, intermarriage, and imagination,” is a modern Jewish kid trying to win the school science fair.

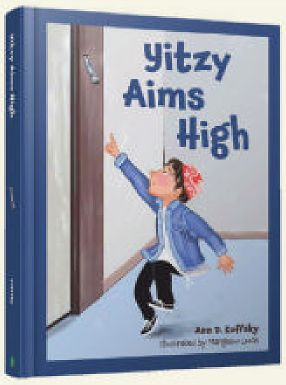
ASTEROID GOLDBERG
Passover in Outer Space
D.I.J. DO IT JEWISH
USE YOUR JEWISH CREATIVITY!
Barbara Bietz
Illustrated by Daria Grinevich

Sayres is undaunted by that descriptive mouthful. “It’s fine with me if this goes over some kids’ heads,” she says. “I’m putting out the books I want to see and my kids want to see.”

A more seasoned participant in the Jewish kids book landscape, Menucha Publishers launched its children’s list in 2011 to bring Orthodox families to the forefront, says editor-in-chief Esther Heller. Three in four of Menucha’s 50 annual titles are for children.

“We’re not trying to be trendy or on the cutting edge of issues of our times,” Heller says. “We want to stick with good books that feature stories of Jews from all over the world.”

Highlights from Menucha’s calendar include: *Don’t Thank Me* (out now), a lighthearted look at gratitude and grandparents by Rebecca Perlowitz with illustrations by Jim Starr; *Layla’s Sugarland Winter* (Dec.), the second book in a mystery series by Faygie Holt, author of several Menucha middle grade titles starring girls; and *Yitzy Aims High* (out now) by veteran Jewish children’s author Ann Kofsky, illustrated by Margeaux Lucas, featuring a boy and an older man in a wheelchair who help each other in an act of faith.

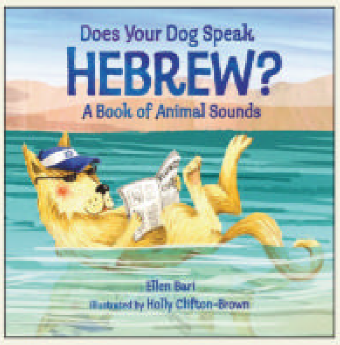


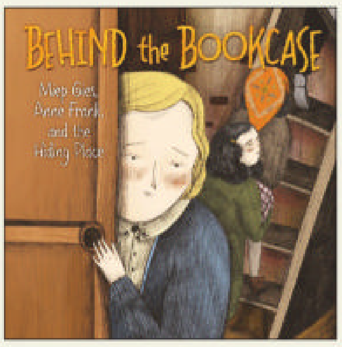
Layla's Sugarland Winter
FAYGIE HOLT

Kar-Ben, which was founded in 1972 and bought by Lerner Publishing Group in 2001, will be releasing 24 new books by August 2021, adding to a backlist of more than 400 titles. Sussman, who took the reins nearly 20 years ago, calls Kar-Ben a “mainstream house showing the entire spectrum of the rich culture of American Jewry.”

“We are very focused on allowing Jewish kids to see all kinds of Jews’ lives and practices,” she says. “We have male and female rabbis. We have Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews, Jews of color, same-sex Jewish weddings, and we still pay attention to history and holiday books.”

A sampling from Kar-Ben’s upcoming calendar includes books with humor, history, and Jewish values, such as *Does Your Dog Speak Hebrew? A Book of Animal Sounds* (out now), a board book by Ellen Bari and illustrator Holly Clifton-Brown, which compares the words children use for animals in Israel and in the U.S. *Behind the Bookcase: Miep Gies, Anne Frank, and the Hiding Place* (out now) by writer Barbara Lowell and graphic designer Valentina Toro tells the story of the courageous Dutch woman who helped hide the Frank family from the Nazis and saved Anne’s diary after the Franks were captured. Another story based on true events, *The Singer and the Scientist* (Apr. 2021) by Lisa Rose, tells how scientist Albert Einstein, living in Princeton in 1937,





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New Children’s Books on Grief

A Little Blue Bottle
Jennifer Grant, Illustrated by Gillian Whiting
9781640652897
$17.95 | hardcover
Age Range: 3-8 years old

“A powerful, beautifully poignant story . . . a must-have for all libraries, all therapists, and all families dealing with grief, past and present.”
—Joy Jordan-Lake, PhD, author of the picture book *Crazy-Much Love* and the best-selling novel *A Tangled Mercy*

Mom and Dad in Heaven
Alf K. Walgermo, Illustrated by Øyvind Torseter
9781640653740
$17.95 | hardcover
Age Range: 8-11 years old

The moving story of a young girl struggling to understand her parents’ untimely deaths in an accident. Set at a third-fifth grade reading level, children who may be grappling with loss and grief will find Mary’s story accessible and comforting as they navigate their feelings and questions together.

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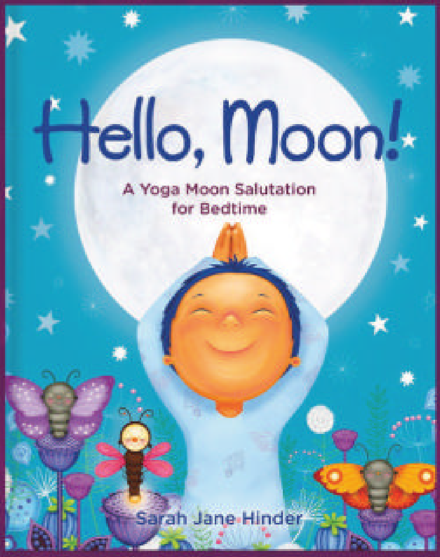
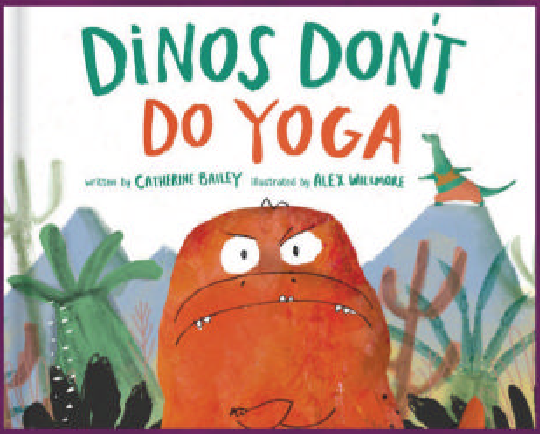
BIG LESSONS FOR LITTLE READERS


Hello, Moon!
A Yoga Moon Salutation for Bedtime
Sarah Jane Hinder

978-1-68364-622-8

Experience a guided Moon Salutation flow that will spark children's imaginations and help them wind down at the end of the day.

ON SALE OCTOBER 27


DINOS DON'T DO YOGA
written by CATHERINE BAILEY illustrated by ALEX WILLMORE

978-1-68364-414-9

Follow along in this fun-filled dinosaur story with timely themes about kindness, friendship, and being able to see past our differences.

ON SALE NOVEMBER 17

sounds true
Distributed by Macmillan Publishers

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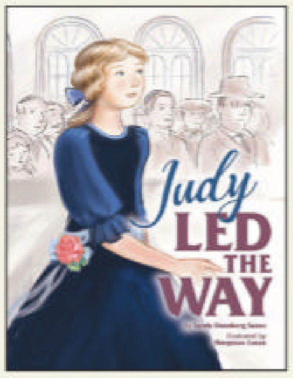

Judy LED THE WAY

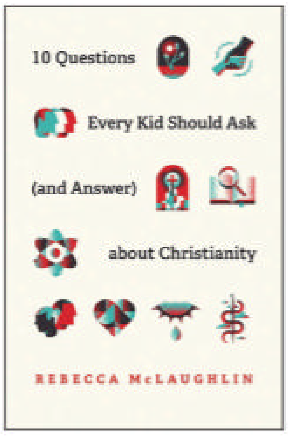
hosted the stellar Black opera singer Marian Anderson when no hotel would take her in after a concert.

Even Kar-Ben is a newcomer compared to Behrman House, a nearly century-old family-owned publisher of resources for Jewish education and celebration. Behrman formally launched the Apples & Honey Press imprint in 2015 with the motto "children's books warmed by Jewish wisdom." But Behrman had been publishing children's books for years before the imprint and has added titles to the PJ Library, says Behrman partner Vicki Weber.

"We think kids are pretty sophisticated," Weber says. "They learn from things that are fun and that are touching." Apples & Honey's upcoming list of nine titles is populated with zany creatures, cross-cultural tales, pathbreaking women both real and imagined, and Bible tales with a twist. *SharkBot Shalom* by Jenna Waldman, illustrated by Sharon Davie,

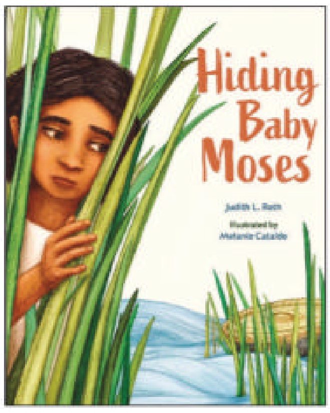
continued from p. 23

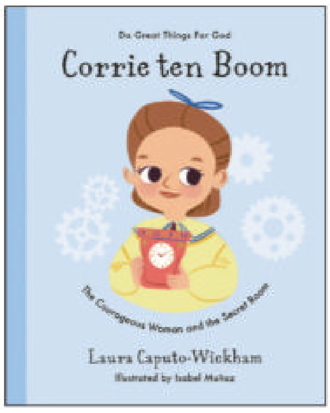
(Apr. 2021), written and illustrated by Chris Raschka, turns a visit to a church into an adventurous tour through the stories of saints told in stained glass, symbols, and statuary.


10 Questions Every Kid Should Ask (and Answer) about Christianity
REBECCA McLAUGHLIN

Conservative Christian publisher Crossway sees teens as ready to skip the fun and games and get down to theologically solid straight talk about the Christian worldview and life. *10 Questions Every Kid Should Ask (and Answer) About Christianity* by Rebecca McLaughlin (Jan. 2021) takes on questions such as "Why can't we just agree that love is love?" and "Who cares if you're a boy or a girl?" from a biblical perspective.

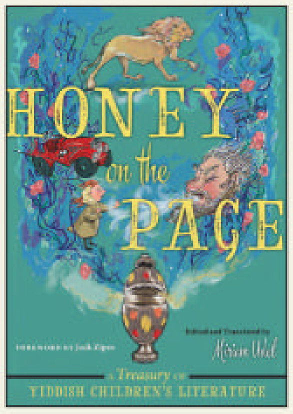
Inspiring narratives


Hiding Baby Moses
Judith L. Roth
Illustrated by Melanie Cataldo


Do Great Things For God
Corrie ten Boom
The Courageous Woman and the Secret Room
Laura Caputo-Wickham
Illustrated by Isabel Muñoz

Often the lessons of faith are exemplified in biographies and story collections focused on courageous people guided and fortified by religious values and beliefs. Sometimes the star of the story is someone unexpected, as in *Hiding Baby Moses* (Flyaway Books, Apr. 2021) by Judith L. Roth, illustrated by Melanie Cataldo, which is told from the perspective of Moses's sister Miriam. *Kuan Yin: The Princess Who Became the Goddess of Compassion* (Bala Kids, May) by Maya van der Meer, illustrated by Wen Hsu, is a fictional biography drawn from an ancient Chinese Buddhist folktale about compassion, love, and finding the strength to follow one's own path. *Brave Heroes and Bold Defenders* (Harvest House, Oct.) by Shirley Raye Redmond and illustrated by Katya Longhi details the lives of "50 courageous men who put faith into action." In September 2021, Church will release *Absalom Jones: Leader and Guide* by Mark Francisco Bozzuti-Jones. "As the church pays attention to its own sins of racism, a book that celebrates the life of a former slave and America's first ordained Black priest offers encouragement, guidance, hope, and inspiration today," says Bryan.

The Good Book Company will launch a new series, Do Great Things for God, with two biographies of notable women written by Laura Caputo-Wickham, both publishing in April 2021. *Corrie ten Boom: The Courageous Woman and the Secret Room*, illustrated by Isabel Munoz, recounts the actions of the Dutch watchmaker, who saved Jewish lives from Nazi persecution. *Betsey Stockton: The Girl with a Missionary Dream*, illustrated by Eunji Jung, tells the life story of Stockton, born enslaved, who grew up to begin the first educational system in Haiti.



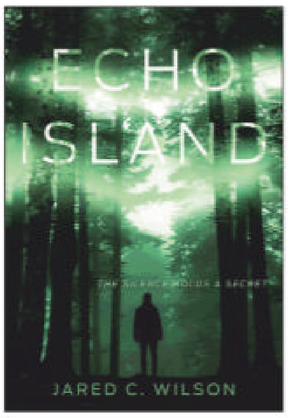
tells of a "robot shark who literally recharges on Shabbat," says Weber. *Pumpkin Pie for Sigd* (Aug. 2021) by Tzivia Macleod, illustrated by Denise Damanti, features the Ethiopian Jewish fall holiday of Sigd. Bestselling author Sandy Eisenberg Sasso and illustrator Margeaux Lucas offer the story of Judy Kaplan, the first girl to receive a bat mitzvah (the Jewish coming-of-age ceremony) in the U.S., in *Judy Led the Way* (out now).

But you don't have to be a Jewish publisher to launch a Jewish title that goes beyond Hanukkah food and games. New York University Press is among those bringing modern readers another perspective on Judaism with a compendium of Yiddish children's stories and poems titled *Honey on the Page, A Treasury of Yiddish Children's Literature* (Oct.), edited and translated by Miriam Udel and illustrated by Paula Cohen, which features fables, family sagas, and more. —Cathy Lynn Grossman

Allegory, adventure, and fantasy

Tyndale is planning a third book in its Sunlit Lands series by Matt Mikalatos next summer, a story that weaves together the life of a gravely ill high school girl who enters a land of elves and dwarfs, secrets, and magical warfare. Ultimately, says Linda Howard, "it's about how the choices you make can change the world around you. Fantasy appeals to middle schoolers: it takes them away from the craziness around them."

Howard adds that Tyndale will launch another teen series in 2021, set in a society founded and run by women who are tired of abuse by men. The first two titles in the series, both by Jess Corban, are *A Gentle Tyranny* (Feb. 2021) and *A Brutal Justice* (summer 2021). These books raise questions, Howard says, like "Do you want vengeance or justice?" and "Are you okay with dehumanizing someone else?" She adds: "It's very crossover in appeal, but the underlying values, such as forgiveness, are Christian. We are who we are at Tyndale, and we want to be able to reach a broader audience without compromising. You don't have to worry about sex and swearing and those kind of things in a Tyndale book."



In October, B&H will release the novel Echo Island by Jared Wilson, in which four teens confront myth and mystery, question the nature of reality, and learn to submit to God's story, according to the publisher.

WaterBrook & Multnomah will release four new titles in its Wingfeather Saga series by Andrew Peterson: *The Monster in the Hollows* and *The Warden and the Wolf King* (both Oct.); *Wingfeather Tales: Six Thrilling Stories from the World of Aerwiar* (Mar. 2021), with coauthors Jonathan Rogers, N.D. Wilson, Jennifer Trafton, Douglas McKelvey, and A.S. Peterson; and *Creaturepedia* (Sept. 2021).

ANDREW PETERSON
THE WINGFEATHER SAGA
THE MONSTER IN THE HOLLOWS
ANDREW PETERSON
THE WINGFEATHER SAGA
THE WARDEN AND THE WOLF KING

Peterson says the Wingfeather story arc "isn't overtly Christian—but it is *deeply Christian*, because hopefully it gets down to the bone-deep realities of human brokenness, selfishness, despair, and the even deeper realities of forgiveness and sacrificial love.

Love all around

Toddlers and readaloud parents alike will find books that are as cozy as lullabies and cheery as a holiday this year, including *All the Colors of Christmas* (Convergent, out now)

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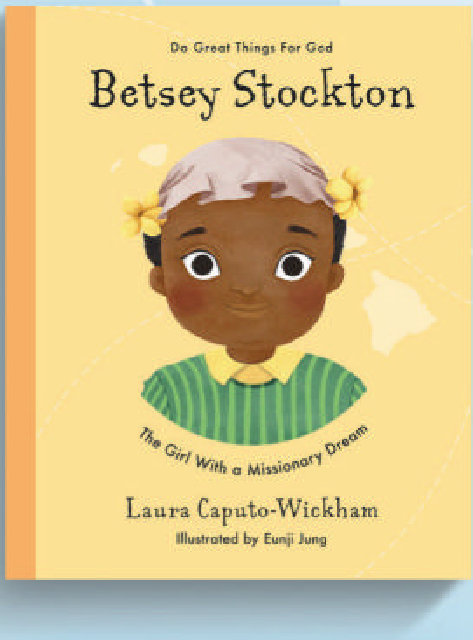
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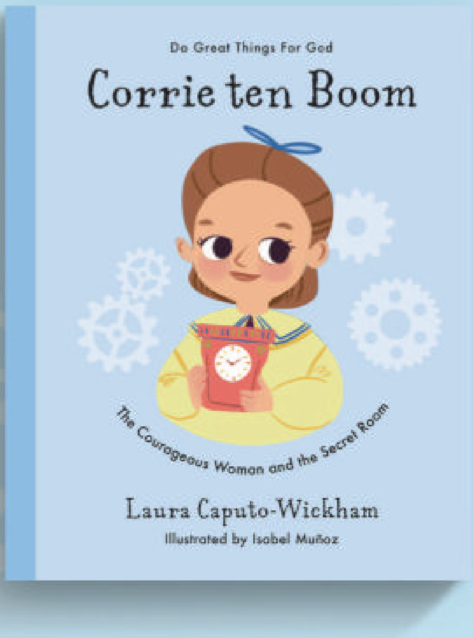
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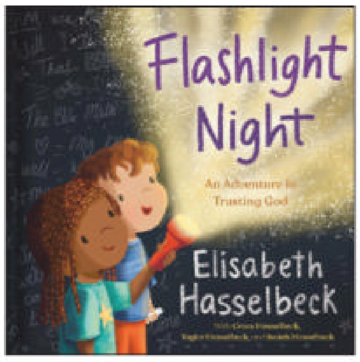
by Matthew Paul Turner and illustrated by Gillian Gamble. The book explores the colors that make the season "magical and personal," according to the publisher.

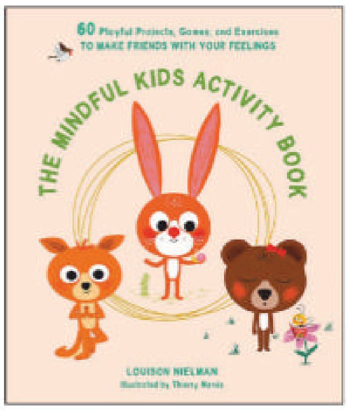
WaterBrook & Multnomah also has sweet titles for young readers. *What a Beautiful Name* (out now), written by singer-songwriters Brooke Ligertwood and Scott Ligertwood and illustrated by Ben Fielding and Karalee Fielding, is based on Hillsong Worship's Grammy-winning hit song about discovering all names are linked to Jesus's name. *Hand to Hold* (July 2021), based on popular songwriter J.J. Heller's beloved lullaby, with illustrations by Alyssa Peterson, reminds children they can "trust their parents to love and be their champions, whatever else may be going on in the larger world, says Laura Barker, v-p and publisher for WaterBrook & Multnomah. And in *Flashlight Night: An Adventure in Trusting God* (Feb. 2021) by author and former TV host Elisabeth Hasselbeck and illustrated by Julia Seal, a little boy writes down his fears, and his mother shines a flashlight on the list to show him God knows his cares and prayers, Barker says.


Flashlight Night
An Adventure in Trusting God
Elisabeth Hasselbeck

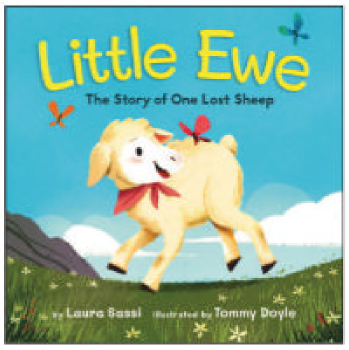
Critters are spiritual stars

Animals are frequently stand-ins for kids—erasing any subtle visual implication that one race or ethnic group has an inside track on spirituality in storytelling.

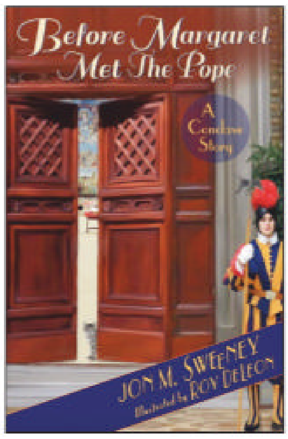
Prolific author Lisa Todd Bergren carries on her God Gave Us series with *God Gave Us Prayer* (WaterBrook, out now), illustrated by David Holm, featuring Mama Pup teaching Little Pup about how and why to speak to God. Bala Kids has Bailey the Bear, Katie the Kangaroo, and Ricky the Rabbit star in *The Mindful Kids Activity Book* (Apr.) by Louison Nielman with illustrator Thierry Manès, a book designed "to help kids learn about anger, anxiety, and stress, and how to deal with these challenging emotions," according to the publisher.


60 Playful Projects, Games, and Exercises to Make Friends with Your Feelings
The Mindful Kids Activity Book
Louison Nielman

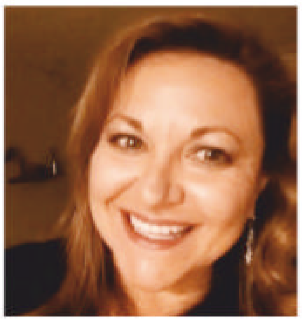
Forthcoming from Tyndale House is *My Arms Will Hold You Tight* (Jan. 2021), a board book by Crystal Bowman and her daughter Teri McKinley, with Anna Kubaszewska's illustrations of adorable baby llamas, elephants, sloths, and more. Mike Nawrocki, of *VeggieTales* fame, features animal characters in a Tyndale series titled the Dead Sea Squirrels (a play on the Dead Sea scrolls), illustrated by Luke Séguin-Magee." The series stars Merle and Perle, miraculous squirrels who once heard Jesus preach, lay hidden in caves for centuries, and then came to life again to share the gospel—and fun adventures—with contemporary kids. Two new Dead Sea Squirrels titles, *Merle of Nazareth* and *A Dusty Donkey Detour*, will release in April.


Little Ewe
The Story of One Lost Sheep
Laura Sassi
Tommy Doyle

Little Ewe (1517 Media, Feb.) by Laura Sassi, illustrated by Tommy Doyle, stars a ewe in the Gospel parable of the lost sheep and the persistent shepherd. *Before Margaret Met the Pope: A Conclave Story* (Paraclete Press, Apr. 2021) by publisher and author Jon Sweeney, with illustrator Roy DeLeon, is a prequel to Sweeney's The Pope's Cat series that follows Margaret as a kitten in Rome's Vatican City, home of the Catholic Church. *The Spider Who Saved Christmas* (Sophia Press, Oct.) by Raymond Arroyo with illustrator Randy Gallagos features a spider who distracts Herod's soldiers from the Holy Family hiding in a cave. ■


Before Margaret Met The Pope
A Conclave Story
Jon M. Sweeney
Roy DeLeon

PW Talks with Ernesto Quiñonez



Leylha Ahuile

It is said that reality often surpasses fiction, but they are deeply intertwined in *Taína* by Ernesto Quiñonez, a coming-of-age novel that examines the forced sterilization of women in Puerto Rico that took place in both the 1930s and the 1970s. It is estimated that, in those decades, about one-third of Puerto Rican women were sterilized—one of the highest rates of sterilization in the world. Given the recent revelation that U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement is performing mass hysterectomies on detained immigrants at a private detention center in Georgia, this horrific practice is no mere historical footnote.

Taína is the story of Julio, a teenager living in Spanish Harlem who becomes involved with Taína, a pregnant 15-year-old from his high school who claims to be a virgin. Julio chooses to believe her and agrees to work with his ex-con uncle to support her. *Taína,* Quiñonez's third novel, was published by Vintage late last year. *PW* spoke with Quiñonez from his home in Ithaca, N.Y., where he is an associate professor at Cornell University and teaches creative writing, Latino fiction, and magical realism.

How autobiographical is this novel?

Somewhat, as my father was a communist from Ecuador and my mother is Puerto Rican. However, my ties are stronger with the Puerto Rican community, as I arrived in New York City when I was 18 months old and was raised in El Barrio, East Harlem. We didn't live in Queens, N.Y., where the Ecuadorian community has a strong presence.

How close is the story of Taína to the biblical story of Mary and Joseph?

The novel does have religious undertones, but it is more about the sterilization of women in Puerto Rico. It's been done for decades and it's so terrible. It shows how much hate exists towards poor women, as this was a common practice not just in Puerto Rico but also in the barrios in the U.S. It was often financed by companies to ensure their female workers would not miss work; the government also wanted to make sure women with disabilities would not procreate.

How do you introduce the darkness of Taína to your readers?

I deal with it with a bit of comedy and urban magical realism. My goal, in all three of my books, including *Chango's Fire*, is to bring magical realism to the barrios, make it more urban. That's where these stories take place and that is why students connect with them. They've all had classmates that were pregnant, but usually the boy doesn't take responsibility, whereas in this book Julio falls in love with Taína and does anything, even commits crimes, in order to provide for her and the baby.

For me, magical realism takes place in urban settings, not just in the villages of Latin America. Where do you see a large group of Tibetan monks trying to figure out how to buy MetroCards while a Mexican mariachi band is playing music? In the New York City metro.

Bodega Dreams celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. Is it still very popular among high school students?

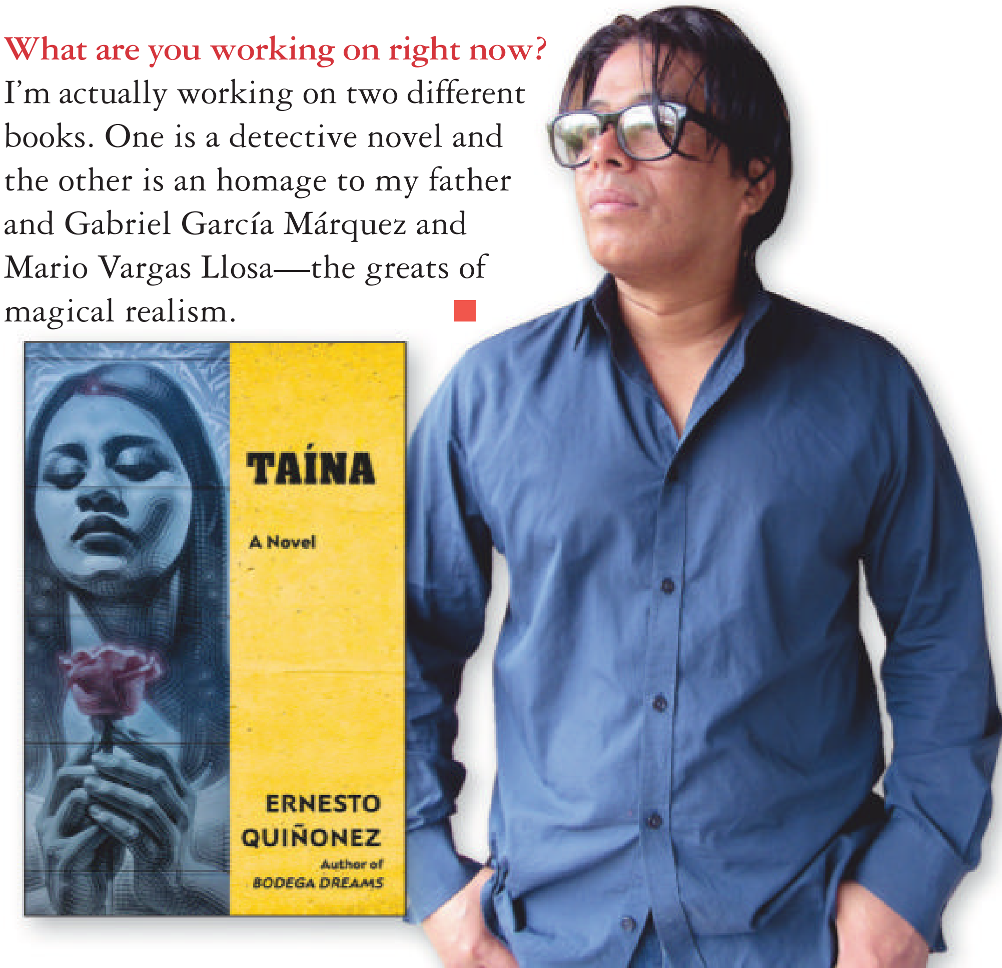
Yes, and I wish that weren't the case. It's the story of Willie Bodega in Spanish Harlem. He helps everyone in exchange for loyalty—and an income from the drugs he pushes. I wish it weren't relevant today, but Spanish Harlem hasn't changed—poverty and drug use are still the norm. I would be happier if things had improved and the novel no longer felt relevant.

You had not published a novel in quite a few years. Were you taking a break?

Not necessarily a break from writing, but my daughter, Scarlet Esther, was born, and I just love spending time with her. I wanted to really enjoy her and dedicate time to her. Now she is a young teenager and spending time with her father is not as much fun, so I started to dedicate more time to writing. You know how teenagers are.

What are you working on right now?

I'm actually working on two different books. One is a detective novel and the other is an homage to my father and Gabriel García Márquez and Mario Vargas Llosa—the greats of magical realism.



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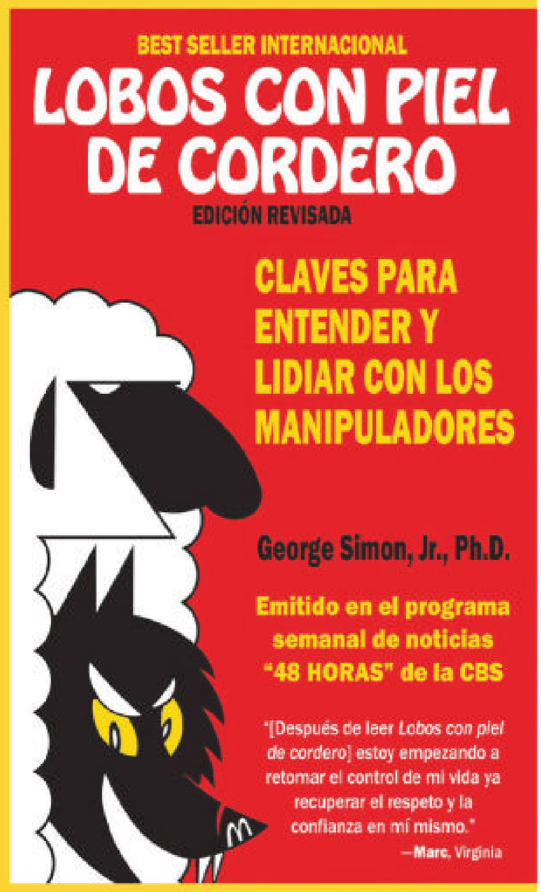
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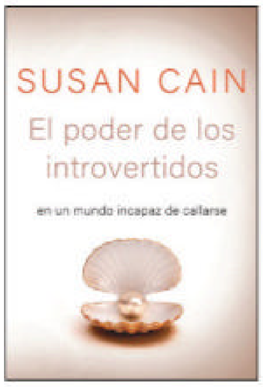

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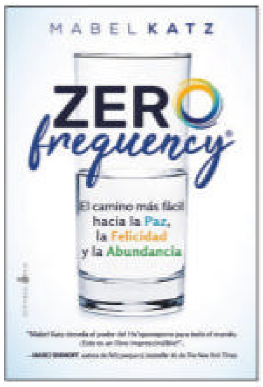

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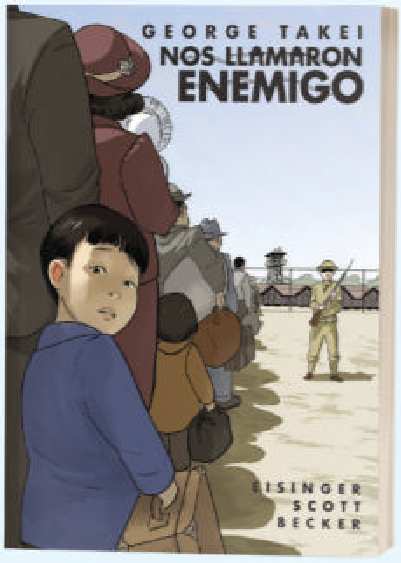

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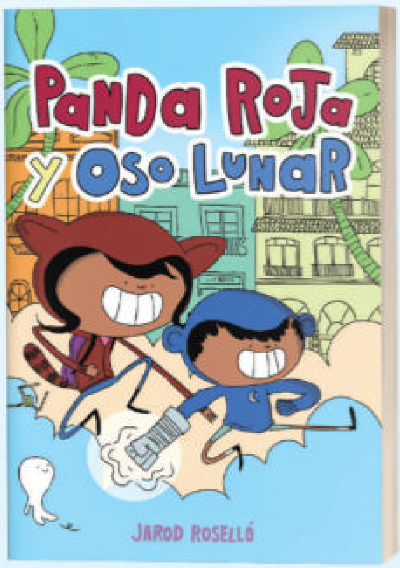

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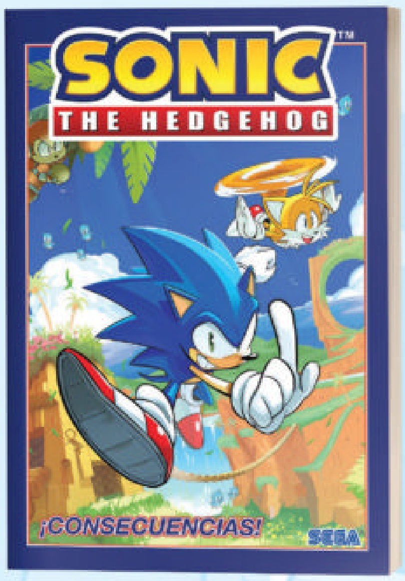

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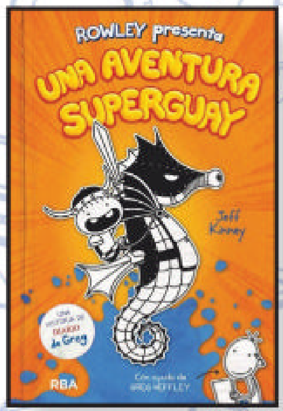
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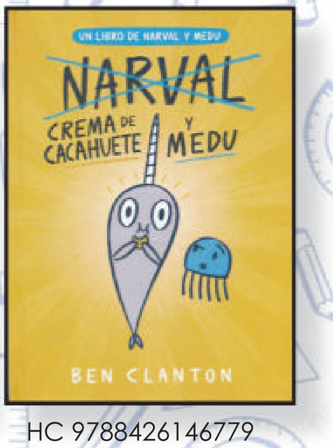
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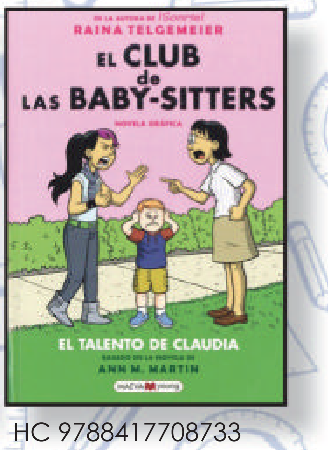
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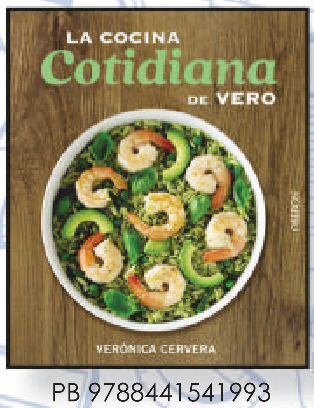
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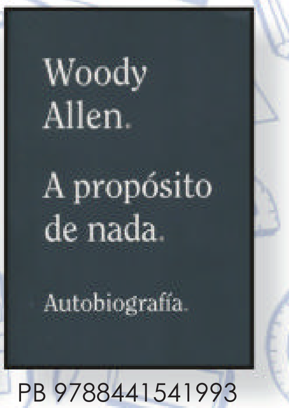
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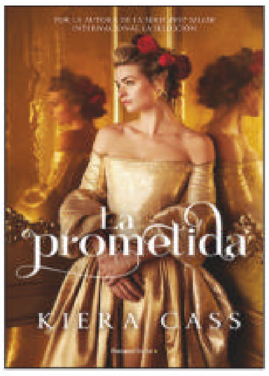

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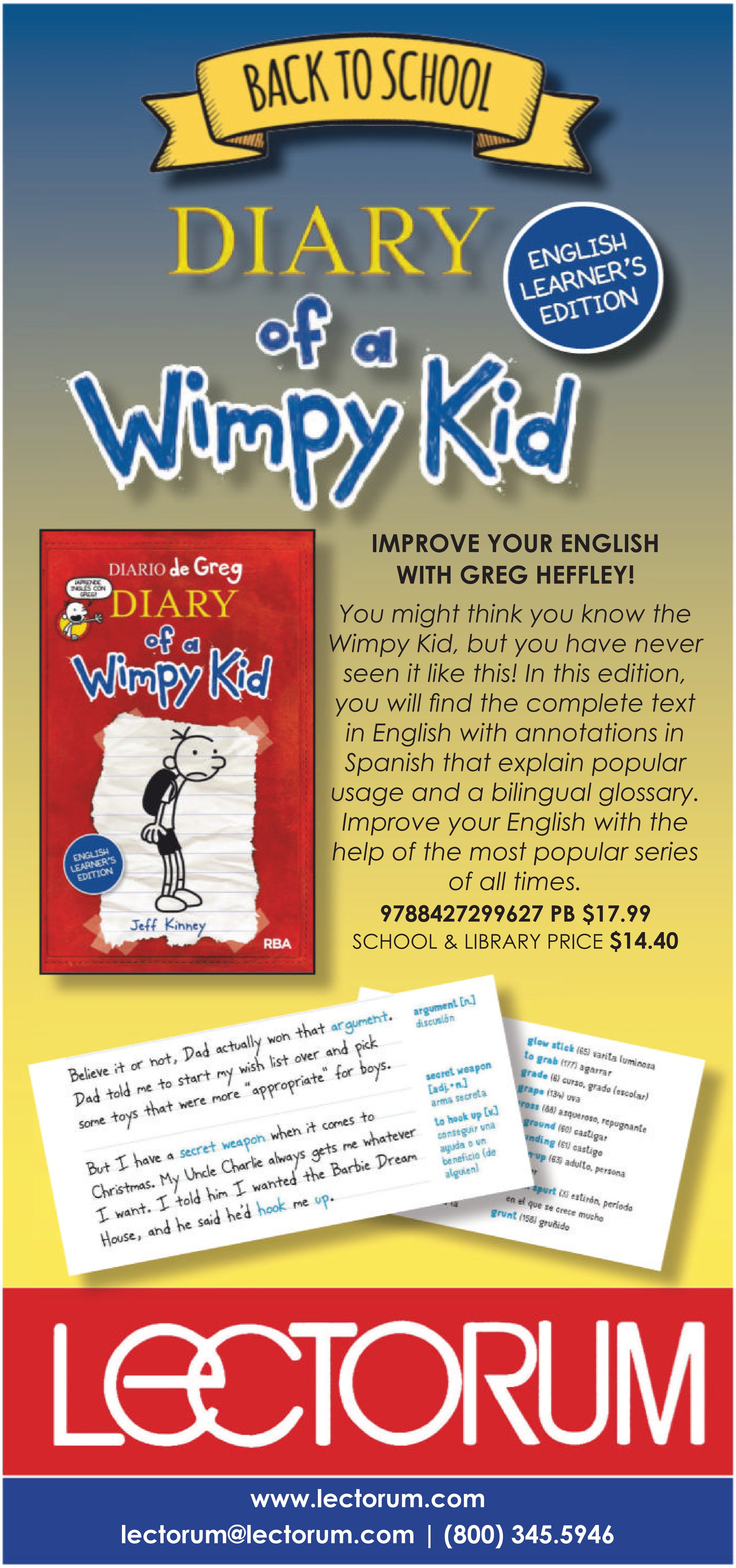

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secret weapon [adj.+n.] arma secreta
to hook up [v.] conseguir una ayuda o un beneficio (de alguien)

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FRANKFURT 2020: A VIRTUAL EXPERIMENT

With the physical fair canceled, the international event is creating new online opportunities for publishers

By Ed Nawotka

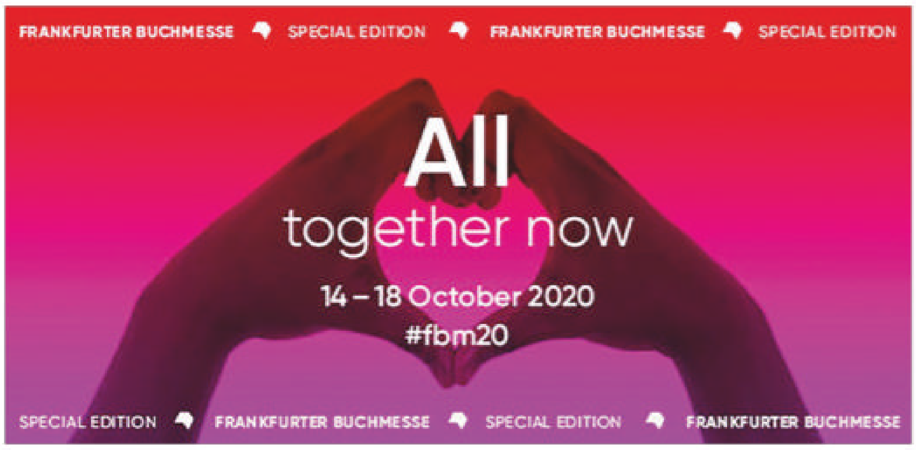
"This year is an experiment," says Frankfurt Book Fair director Juergen Boos of the reimagined event, which will take place October 12–18. Organizers of the fair, which is the centerpiece of the international publishing calendar, canceled the in-person fair at the beginning of the month, citing travel restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic as the reason; 800 exhibitors and 40 national stands were affected by the cancellation. "People were very much looking forward to the fair, which many hoped would be a signal of the end of the pandemic," Boos says, "but that is obviously not the case, so it is very emotional for all of us."

Exhibitors who registered for this year's fair will have their registration converted to one for the digital fair. In addition, companies that made payments for space rental will have the option of having those payments either refunded or rolled over to the 2021 fair.

Approximately 80 live events will still take place in and around the city of Frankfurt, but the majority of these are consumer-facing author presentations that are part of the fair's Bookfest program, which launched last year. This year's Bookfest will include virtual appearances by Elizabeth Gilbert, Karin Slaughter, Don Winslow, and new PEN president Ayad Akhtar.

Juergen Boos

Some other key aspects of the fair, such as the opening press conference and keynote speech, will be filmed live on the grounds of the Messe in the Festhalle, which last year housed the LitAg literary agents center and will this year serve as a broadcast studio capable of hosting a live audience of as many as 450 people. Boos notes that the fair has been in near-constant conversation with the national and local health authorities to ensure that any in-person events meet all safety protocols. "The German government, the state of Hessen, and the city of Frankfurt have all been very supportive of us," Boos says, adding that the German minister of culture, Monika Grütters, will attend the fair's opening ceremony "as an affirmation of just how important literary culture and the creative industries are to the country." The keynote speaker at the opening ceremony will be Israeli author David Grossman. "I thought that, given this moment in time, with a pandemic and populist politics present throughout the world, that Grossman is a perfect person to open this very special edition of the fair," Boos says.



Virtual B2B networking and programming

As for how Americans can participate in this year's fair, much of it involves the opportunity to take part in the book fair's online B2B matchmaking sessions, which will be facilitated through Frankfurt's website and app. "This is our attempt to help recreate the spirit of the fair," says Boos, who notes that years of data and metadata accumulated from prior fair registrations will help facilitate useful interactions, and virtual fairgoers will be shielded from being spammed with unwanted meeting requests from unsuitable vendors and people. "AI is running much of it behind the scenes," Boos says, "but our entire team at the book fair is also involved in helping." The fair will be hosting proprietary, invite-only events to supplement the private meetings arranged between fairgoers—something this year's digital platform will facilitate.

Boos has long sought to turn Frankfurt into a forum for both book publishers and content creators, citing last year's CEO talk with Netflix International Originals vice president Kelly

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More than 80 live events will be held in and around the city of Frankfurt.

Luegenbiehl as the type of programming he'd like the fair to offer more often and the type of executive he wants to attract.

Virtual B2B sessions are beginning October 5 and will include prerecorded Market Insight sessions, which will offer an overview of individual markets around the world—including one hosted by *PW*. Networking opportunities also begin on September 24 with the launch of The Hof, an informal online social hub inspired by the nighttime parties held during the fair at the Frankfurter Hof hotel, and will offer music and short, inspirational interviews with industry leaders.

As for the fair itself, a series of themed virtual conferences will run from 9 to 11:30 a.m. EDT daily. October 12 focuses on academic and scholarly publishing. October 13, which covers rights and licensing, will include the traditional Rights Meeting, this year featuring agent Andrew Nurnberg, Anna Soler-Pont of the Pontas Agency, Marty Brochstein from Licensing International, and Corinne Quentin of Bureau des Copyrights Francais, among others. (For details about how literary agents and rights directors are handling the fair, see "Going Virtual" on p. 41.)

The October 14 program focuses on publishing insights, with presentations from Waterstones and Barnes & Noble CEO James Daunt; Canongate UK commercial director Jenny Fry; Caroline Leavitt, author and cofounder of A Mighty Blaze; Gustavo Lembert, publisher of TAGLivros in Brazil; and Ananth Padmanabhan, CEO of HarperCollins Publishers India, On October 15, Videl Bar-Kar, global head of audio at Bookwire; Javier Celaya of Dosdoce; and Magnus Nytell, head of international expansion at Nextory will offer presentations on audiobooks, and several Meet the Editors events will feature discussions with editors from a single country—such as a U.S. panel featuring Gabriella Page-Fort of Amazon Crossing; Kendall Storey from Catapult, Counterpoint, and Soft Skull Press; and Michael Wise of New Vessel Press. There will also be events covering several timely topics, including selling political and social justice books in the U.S. and recent developments in Arab publishing. Bodour Al Qasimi, v-p of the International Publishers Association, will lead a discussion on women and publishing in Africa; additionally, a larger session addressing nonfiction publishing around the world will feature Karina Bolasco, director of Ateneo UP (Philippines); Colleen Higgs, publisher of Modjaji Books (South Africa); Veruschka Selbach, managing director of Pluto Press (U.K.); and Hernán López Winne of Ediciones Godot (Argentina). Literary scout Maria Campbell will also be speaking during the fair, about expanding the audience of readers.

New this year will be a track for international booksellers who sell foreign-language titles in their bookshops and who would like to gain insight into the workings of the German book market and German publishing. The fair is selecting some two dozen booksellers to take part in an exclusive training, exchange, and networking program to be held during the fair, as well as through October and November. (Applications to join the program are due by September 28.) In addition, the European and International Booksellers Federation will be holding an online discussion as part of the fair, on the topic of helping to make bookselling and publishing environmentally sustainable.

Making the best of it

Simon & Schuster president and CEO Jonathan Karp agrees that networking and rights needed to be at the heart of what Frankfurt provides. "According to our rights directors, nothing matches Frankfurt as an opportunity to see a slew of knowledgeable industry players quickly," Karp says. "Also, many times, having the publishers see a physical book or galley makes all the difference in the interest you get for a book. It is hard to get excited over a PDF without holding the book and seeing how the finished book looks. Friendly Zoom calls aren't a substitute for the chatty give-and-take about markets, trends, and larger industry changes that face-to-face meetings afford. No chance encounters, either! We don't know that anything can replace the relationship-building done over a cup of coffee, dinner, or even some snacks at the stand. There is one upside, though. Colleagues here, who normally wouldn't be able to travel to the fair, will be able to join in on some meetings and get valuable experience. We are all trying to make the best of the situation."

In 2019, more than 300,000 people attended the fair in person.

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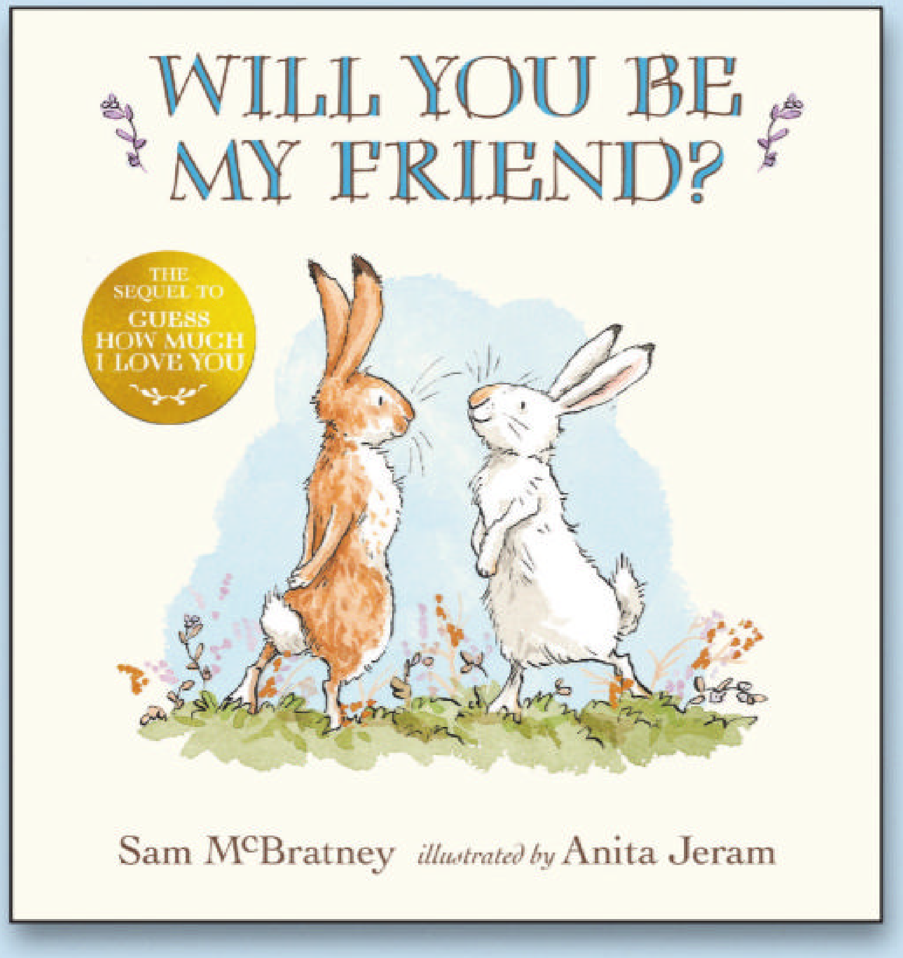
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Hachette Book Group CEO Michael Pietsch echoes Karp's sentiment, noting that he and his team will miss meeting up with friends and colleagues at the fair, particularly at the company's annual party on the fair's opening day. "But, as we did with BookExpo, we're looking at this virtual Frankfurt Book Fair as an opportunity," Pietsch says. "We'll use this year's fair to put to the test the many digital collaboration tools that we've been deploying all year, and to come out of it with a clearer sense of what is truly essential about the in-person experience. We look forward to returning in the future better able to spread enthusiasm and maximize the value of the international publishing community for our authors."

Canada, which was slated to be the guest of honor country in Frankfurt this year, has had its program delayed to 2021. Gillian Fizet, executive director of Canada FBM 2020, says that a key component of the guest of honor program each year is facilitating the translation of titles into German. "We exceeded our goal of having 200 titles translated from Canadian English- and French-language publishers," Fizet says. "Most of these are being published this year in time for the fair, and only some have been delayed, so we want to make sure that they don't get overlooked because of the pandemic." To give a "taste" of next year's programming, Fizet's organization is producing a trio of mini-documentaries that will screen during the fair, featuring Canadian authors discussing themes of hope, diversity, and storytelling through images. Spain, which is the guest of honor country for 2022, will also hold a preview session, which will offer specific information about translation grants.

Kristin Cochrane, CEO of Penguin Random House Canada, whose publishing house is responsible for publishing several of the 53 Canadian authors scheduled to make the trip abroad, says she appreciates the steps Frankfurt has taken to work with the Canadian publishing industry over new plans for the guest of honor event. "We are grateful for the wise decision to delay, to keep our authors safe and to celebrate them in 2021 with the fanfare they deserve," Cochrane says. Nevertheless, she adds, "We're still looking forward to participating in this year's events, celebrating our books and authors, and making virtual contact with other attendees around the world. In many cases, Frankfurt's digital offerings will be more accessible to a wider group, including those for whom the costs of travel have put Frankfurt out of reach in previous years, allowing a broader range of our colleagues to participate and broaden their networks."

Adapting, for now

Further afield, Pakistani publisher Babar Maqbool says this will be his first break in 10 consecutive years of going to Frankfurt, and notes that not attending "fills me with sorrow." Nonetheless, he doesn't feel the lack of a physical fair will have a significant impact on his business. "From a business point of view, however, the lack of it this year would affect more nostalgia than business," Maqbool says. "There isn't anything that can't be done by skipping it, I'm realizing. All the publishers and distributors I may

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Attendees at the 2019 fair walk by a display for MVB, the main service provider to the German publishing industry.

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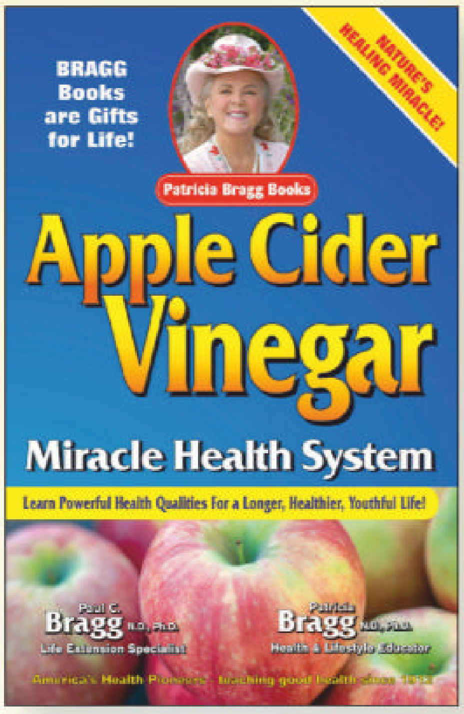
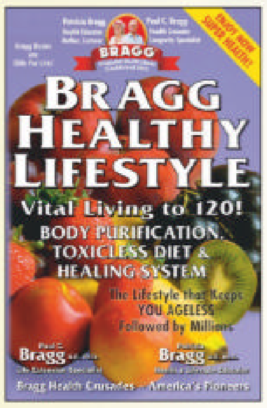
Luiz Schwarcz, publisher of Companhia das Letras in Brazil, notes that “the fact that we are not seeing all the friends and colleagues from the publishing world is a pity, but we are doing excellent deals without traveling.” He adds that he is feeling “very optimistic for the rest of the year about sales,” though he notes that challenges remain, particularly when it comes to supporting independent bookstores in Brazil, which have been struggling since the pandemic began.

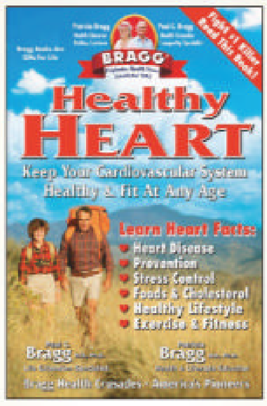
German independent bookstores have similarly struggled during the pandemic. “The book market in Germany is not doing too badly,” says Ronald Schild, managing director at the German trade group MVB. “But indies are down about 10% for the first eight months of the year. Still, they are recovering.” Schild says that overall book sales in Germany were down just 6% through August and that he expects sales to continue to improve for the rest of the year. One thing that has helped, he notes, is that each German bookseller was granted €7,500 to assist with facilitating a transition to online sales.

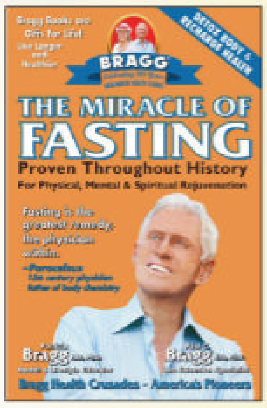
The Frankfurt Book Fair serves as the national book fair for Germany, where books and authors are given their strongest platform for promotion. Schild says that the move to a virtual fair is a serviceable stopgap, but not a viable long-term solution. “The situation we have at the moment is not something we can change, and my personal opinion is that it is bearable, but for a limited amount of time,” he says. “Many booksellers and publishers are really sad that the fair is not happening, and they lament the lack of opportunity to present their books and authors. If it is for a year or two, it will be fine, but any longer may be seriously damaging to the industry.”

FRANKFURTER BUCHMESSE









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ReBoot Kicks Off

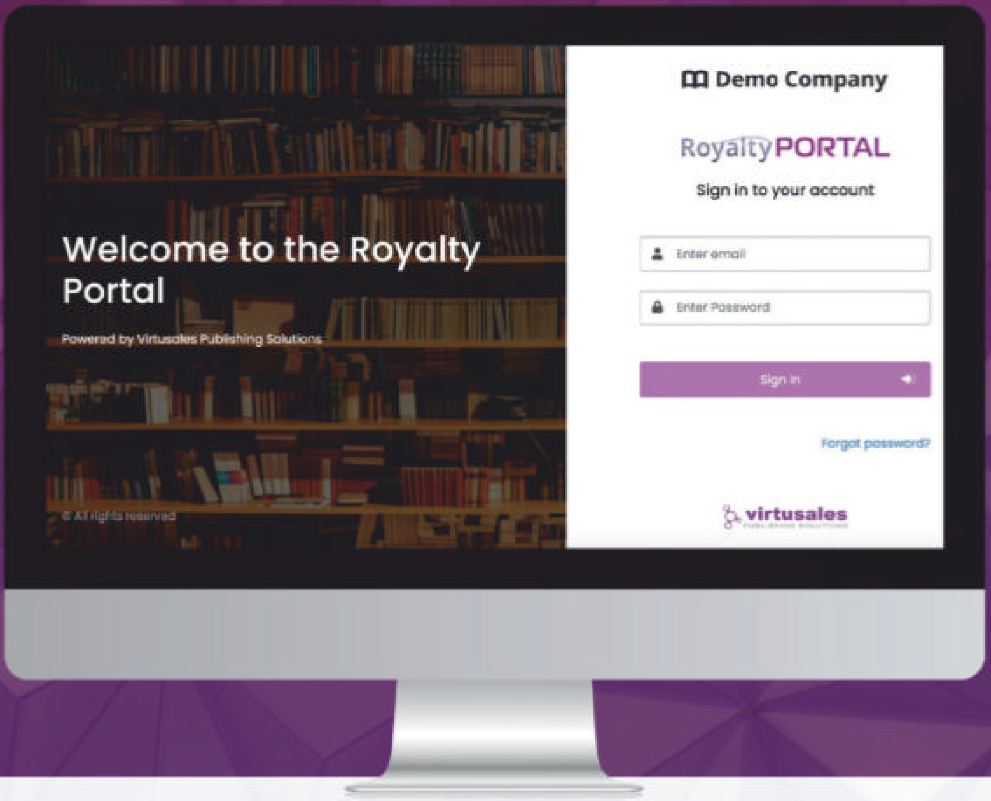
Key insights and market lessons we've learned for 2021
RE BOOT
BOOKS, BUSINESS & READING

ReBoot: Books, Business, and Reading, comprising an October 13 conference plus research tracks, is designed to analyze how Covid-19 could reshape the global publishing industry. Organized by Ruediger Wischenbart Content and Consulting (Austria), Carlo Carrenho (Brazil/ Sweden), and Klaus-Peter Stegen (Germany), in partnership with KNK, Bookwire, *Publishers Weekly*, and #coisadelivreiro, the program will provide a global virtual forum to gather data, write case studies, and foster debate among industry executives and thought leaders on the best ways for the industry to move forward.

The full ReBoot initiative contains a series of “Preparation Tracks” leading up to the October 13 conference, some of which have already begun. These tracks include several workshops on four themes: consumer research; insights into hybrid publishing; bookselling across multiple formats (print and digital), channels (bricks-and-mortar, online), and models (sales, downloads, subscriptions); and finally resulting transformations of the supply chain. The October 13 virtual conference will feature four sessions, each devoted to one of these four main topics.

Conference speakers include John Ingram, CEO of Ingram; Nitasha Devasar, head of distributor Taylor & Francis’s Indian operations; Carmen Ospina, director of marketing, communication, and business development at Penguin Random House Spain and Latin America; and Michael Reynolds of Europa Editions and Eva Ferry of its Italian sister publisher Edizioni E/O. Others set to participate are David Worlock from the Outsell executive consultancy; Knut Nicholas Krause, founder of the KNK publishing software house; Mitchell Davis, founder of BookSurge and now library and author community promotor; and Jens Klingelhöfer, cofounder of the international digital aggregator Bookwire.

More details about ReBoot are available at rebootbooks.org and via @rebootbooks on Twitter. The online conference will go live at 7 a.m. EDT.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GOING VIRTUAL

American agents prep for a Frankfurt like no other—from their homes

By Rachel Deahl

While the Frankfurt Book Fair officially canceled its in-person fair only two weeks ago, American agents have been planning for an online-only event for months. So what will this year's fair look like for them? Lots of Zoom calls, with some bells and whistles thrown in to make the chats more personal and fun.

Frankfurt, for its part, is offering a number of virtual tools to help sellers connect with buyers. The fair is allowing agents to register this year as exhibitors. Once they've done so, Frankfurt Book Fair v-p Riky Stock explains, they will be given a "contact person" who can edit their entries and upload content for them. They will also have access to an event calendar, through which they can plan invitation-only meetings, and to an exhibitor catalog. The catalog, which is now live, will give the agencies the ability to have a digital presence by including links to their company websites, social media information, and uploaded documents such as rights catalogs. The fair is also providing a digital rights platform where, Stock says, agents can "upload their rights guides, title information, rights availability, and previews of titles." The platform has been branded Frankfurt Rights and borrows elements from IPR License, a virtual rights trading and licensing company owned by Frankfurt. The platform will be free to use through at least June 2021 and, unlike IPR License, will not be taking commissions.

Stock added that some agents may also opt to host webinars. Writers House's Cecilia de la Campa hosted a webinar at last year's Bologna Book Fair and told Stock that webinars have advantages over the in-person meetings. Notably, de la Campa says, webinars allow more people to tune into the presentation, and they can also be saved and shared afterward. "We can reach publishers with whom we don't yet have major business, and we can announce any exciting new deals and sales on the spot to everyone at once," de la Campa says.

Frankfurt will also help promote webinars that agents and

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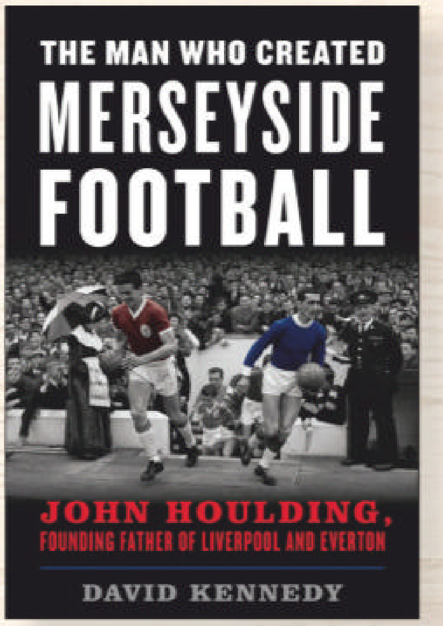
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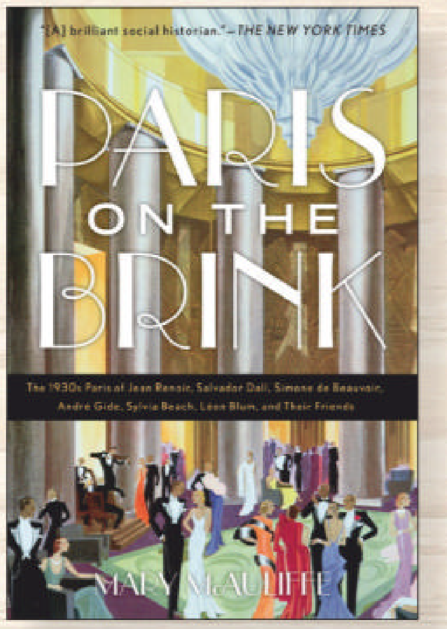
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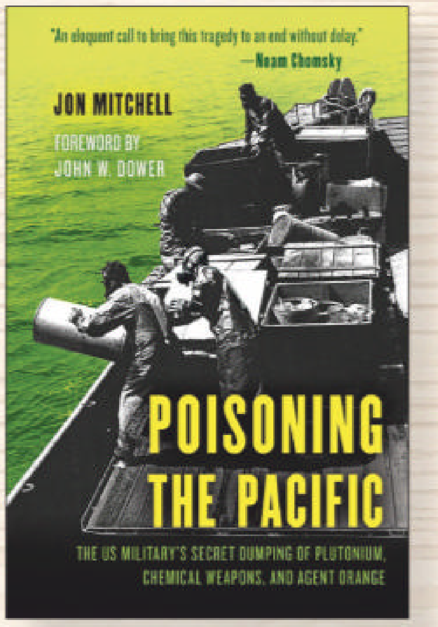
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rights directors choose to host. While the agents will host the meetings on their own, using whichever platforms they choose, the fair will post the webinars in the events calendar and on its Frankfurt Rights dashboard. “We will help with visibility and, to a certain extent, promotion,” Stock says.

FRANKFURTER BUCHMESSE

For some agents, like Jennifer Weltz at the Jean V. Naggar Literary Agency, this year’s unusual event doesn’t offer as many obstacles as one might assume. Weltz says she has been doing Skype meetings with her coagents pre-fair for years; it’s a tradition she started in 2010, when an erupting volcano in Iceland unexpectedly kept numerous Americans from attending the book fair. “When I started [doing the Skype meetings], lots of agents said, ‘I can’t. I don’t have a webcam.’ ” Editors were also resistant. Now, of course, plenty of people are on videoconferencing platforms for most of the day. With that being the new reality, Weltz is predicting that this year’s Frankfurt could be her busiest yet, given that she is, as she notes, totally unshackled by the standard constraints of an in-person event—meetings don’t have to feature only a few people, and they don’t have to happen within the time frame of the fair. And, while she admits she’ll miss seeing people in person, she says she’s confident about getting everything done. “We could be on the moon,” she exclaims, and she can make sales as long as those in her audience “have my list in front of them and we’re facing each other and talking.”

While other agents acknowledge that their fair will be chock-full of Zoom meetings, some are trying different tactics to make the interactions more fun. Sanford Greenburger’s Stefanie Diaz says they have added a “meet the author” feature for this year’s event. “We’re highlighting debut authors and other standout titles with short author videos,” she explains. These will be shared during the meetings Diaz has planned throughout September and October.

That there’s no need to contain business to the run of any physical show—usually three to four days for most agents—is something other agents say is a boon this year. Baror International is, like Sanford Greenburger, stretching business out over two months, with virtual meetings happening throughout September and October. “There’s no reason to tie meetings to a few days,” says the agency’s Heather Baror. “Without the constraints of the fair schedule we can have more meaningful meetings and more of them.” Baror also thinks the virtual realm can allow for “more productive chats than [those held] within the bustle of the fair.”

Foundry Literary + Media is also trying to inject a little fun into the proceedings. The agency has put together an interactive rights guide and, rather than having prospective buyers schedule meetings with the agency’s rights people, they will instead get to talk with the title’s agent or, in some cases, authors. “Each meeting will be a discrete Zoom call that I believe will be more fun and informative than any German agent center meeting ever could be,” explains agency cofounder Peter McGuigan. “We’re making lemonade out of lemons here. Hopefully it’ll stand out and people will notice our books.”

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RELX STAYS #1

The scientific and professional publisher led all global publishers in 2019, with sales of $5.6 billion

By Jim Milliot

The Covid-19 pandemic is likely to alter the publishing landscape in the years ahead, but in the pre-virus age, the world's 10 largest publishers in 2019 were largely the same as in 2018, according to *Livres Hebdo/Publishers Weekly*'s annual ranking of global publishers.

A year after the RELX Group (formerly Reed Elsevier) wrestled away the crown of the world's largest publisher from longtime leader Pearson, the STM, business, and legal publisher stayed #1 with revenue in 2019 of $5.64 billion, about a 7% increase from 2018. The only change in the top 10 between 2018 and 2019 was in the second and third spots, where Thomson Reuters, with a 3% increase in revenue to $5.28 billion, overtook Pearson and moved into second place on the ranking. Hampered by sluggish higher education sales, Pearson had another year of revenue decline but managed to hold onto third place on the global ranking with sales of $5.09 billion.

The other publishers on the top 10 list in 2019 are in the same positions they were in 2018. Publishers focused on the

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professional and educational markets took six of the top 10 spots on the global ranking, with the more trade-oriented publishers occupying the other four slots. Revenue for 2019 was basically flat in Bertelsmann's book publishing segments, which include both the world's largest trade publisher, Penguin Random House, and the company's small but growing education division. Bertelsmann was the #4 publisher in 2019.

How the pandemic will shape publishing going forward is not yet clear, but a couple of events not related to Covid-19 will affect future global rankings. Simon & Schuster, the third-largest trade publisher in the U.S., was put up for sale by new parent company ViacomCBS at the beginning of 2020, and, while the pandemic slowed the sale process, it is expected to soon heat up again. Adding more interest in the fate of S&S was an interview Bertelsmann CEO Thomas Rabe gave the *Financial Times* in early September, in which he said the German giant would be prepared to make a bid for S&S whenever the sale process resumed. HarperCollins, the second-largest trade publisher in the U.S. and the ninth-largest publisher overall worldwide, is also eyeing S&S. CEO Brian Murray, sources confirmed, told employees at a town hall meeting that HC has an interest in acquiring the publisher.

A company that will not move into the top 10 in 2020 is a merged McGraw-Hill-Cengage. The two educational publishing giants called off their proposed merger in May after a yearlong investigation by the Department of Justice. The companies said the inability to agree with the government on what assets needed to be divested to gain approval for the deal was the reason behind the termination of the transaction. In 2019, McGraw-Hill was the world's 11th-largest publisher and Cengage was 12th-largest.

The complete list of the world's largest publishers will appear in an upcoming issue of *PW*. ■

WORLD'S 10 LARGEST PUBLISHERS

($ in millions)

2019 RANK	2018 RANK	PUBLISHING GROUP	PARENT COMPANY	COUNTRY	2019 REVENUE	2018 REVENUE
1	2	RELX Group	Reed Elsevier PLC & Reed Elsevier NV	U.K./U.S./ Netherlands	$5,639	$5,278
2	3	Thomson Reuters	The Woodbridge Company Ltd.	Canada	$5,277	$5,133
3	2	Pearson	Pearson PLC	U.K.	$5,084	$5,244
4	4	Bertelsmann	Bertelsmann AG	Germany	$4,156	$4,150
5	5	Wolters Kluwer	Wolters Kluwer	Netherlands	$3,976	$3,758
6	6	Hachette Livre	Lagardère	France	$2,675	$2,576
7	7	Springer Nature	Springer Nature	Germany	$1,928	$1,997
8	8	John Wiley	John Wiley	U.S.	$1,800	$1,797
9	9	HarperCollins	News Corp	U.S.	$1,754	$1,758
10	10	Scholastic	Scholastic	U.S.	$1,654	$1,628

Note: Figures are based on sales generated in each calendar year or, for companies that report based on fiscal years, in each fiscal year. The listing was compiled by international publishing consultant Ruediger Wischenbart under the aegis of Livres Hebdo.

Source: Livres Hebdo

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No Pause in Digitization and Content Creation in India

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For digital solution providers in India, tweaking workflows, adding new services, and thinking proactively are all about embracing business as unusual

By Teri Tan

This feature is published with the support of the vendors covered in these articles

This is no news flash. The pivot to virtual learning and edtech during the pandemic has created an unprecedented demand for digital content and courseware. Sales of e-books and audiobooks are rising now that bookstores and libraries are mostly closed. In this new reality, digital adoption and content transformation are crucial risk-mitigation strategies for publishers across segments. (Luddites and laggards, please take note.)

Melding technology and innovation and collaborating with publishing partners to address the needs of the hour are top priorities in India, where the largest number of digital solutions vendors are located. But first, vendors had to contend with their own transition to work from home (WFH), including virtual conferencing and a restructured workflow—just like the very clients they serve. As IT-enabled companies, their transition was smoother and faster in many ways.

Most vendors were already deep in WFH experimentation when the March 25 lockdown was announced in India. Weeks earlier, DiacriTech, for instance, had put 20% of its workforce in WFH mode as a trial. “We saw the writing on the wall and were busy planning the necessary emergency measures to maintain critical or key services and functions, and fine-tuning our existing business continuity plan to suit the pandemic situation,” executive v-p A.R.M. Gopinath says. “We made sure that our team was able to provide the same level of service and accessibility with our XEditPro publishing platform in the office and from the home environment. The test case served to tighten our protocols and eliminate any loopholes. So, by the time the lockdown announcement came through, we were ready for a full-swing rollout.”

Nearly 40% of Lapiz Digital’s workforce was already working remotely by mid-March. Moving desktops to employee homes was an issue, especially since some had already relocated out of Chennai, where the company is based, says v-p Meena Prakash, whose team spent about 10 days purchasing laptops and securing stable internet connections.

Home is now where the work is

With its high internet and mobile data penetration, India is tailor-made for WFH. The country has 560 million internet users, representing the world's second-largest online market, and boasts some of the least expensive mobile data plans on the globe.

"VoIP [Voice over Internet Protocol] and web chats among staff are easy now that fast fiber-optic broadband is available in most towns," Gopinath says. "For staff who moved back to their villages during the lockdown, they may not have broadband, but fast and extensive 4G network coverage is at their fingertips."

Secure chat and VoIP-based solutions also keep the communication channels with DiacriTech's clients open, Gopinath says. "Webex Meetings, GoToMeeting, Google Duo, Microsoft TeamViewer, and AnyDesk are just some of the online meeting and web conferencing tools that our project managers use to engage clients. Some clients prefer using WhatsApp to keep in touch, and that is perfectly fine with us. What we want clients to know is that they are backed 24/7 by a team that has over 20 years of experience in publishing."

Past experiences with disruptions caused by monsoons and snowstorms have left Westchester Publishing Services, which has operations in India and the U.S., with a number of protocols and proven workflows suitable for the WFH/pandemic era. "The usage of Zoom, Dropbox, Dropbox Paper, Office 365, and other tools has been a part of our modus operandi for some time already, thus ensuring a smooth WFH transition that keeps our staff and client projects going," chief revenue officer Tyler Carey says. Westchester "is a big fan of Dropbox Paper," he adds. "The ability to replace forms-based processes, organize documentation and client requirements, confirm client project specs, control access, and embed external documents makes it a simple and nimble platform for collaboration internally and with clients."

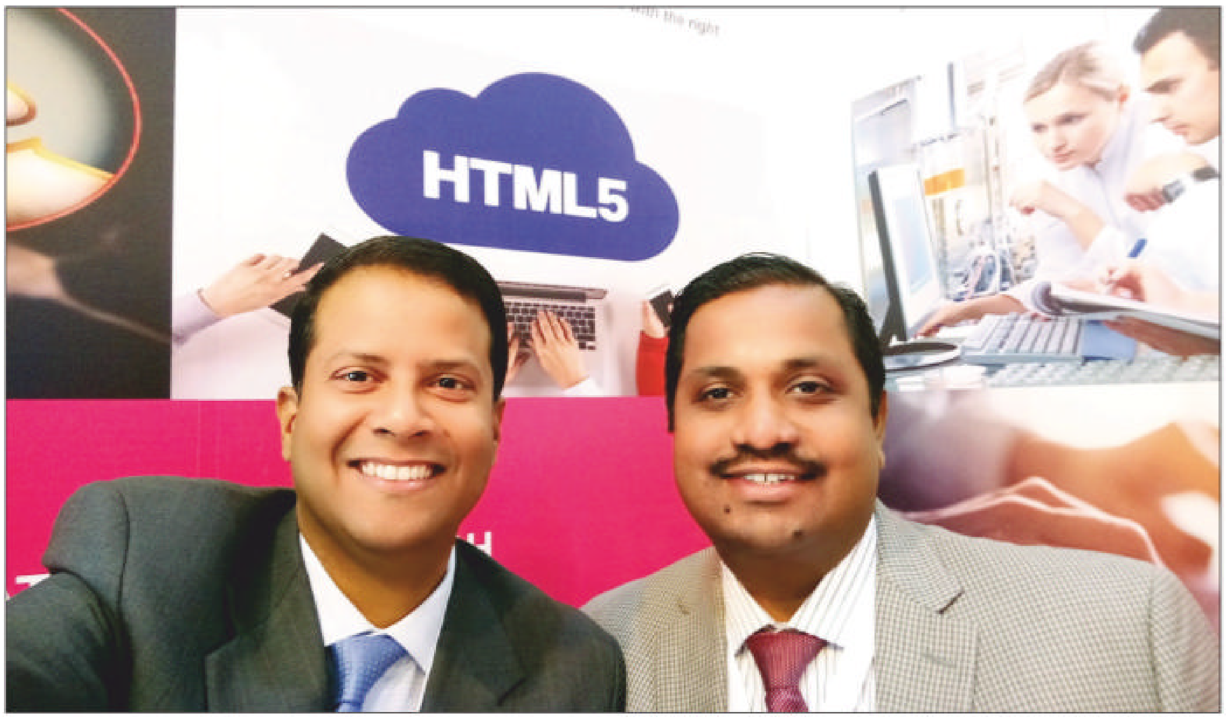
Westchester Publishing Services also went into WFH mode before the lockdown order. Setting up hotspots and ordering laptops to facilitate WFH and ensuring business continuity and productivity were par for the course. "The critical issue lies in making sure that everyone involved in various publishing projects—including freelancers, clients, authors, and contributors—is comfortable with a digital workflow, and knows how to use the tools provided," Carey says. "We found ourselves providing free consulting to our partners, sharing how we used different tools effectively, and we will continue to do so. We have hosted two webinars—now available free from our company website—that bring thought leaders from the industry to talk about WFH and the day-to-day challenges and solutions in publishing."

Looking beyond bits and bytes

The best technology cannot replace a dedicated and motivated staff, Gopinath says. "Communication and coordination issues at the beginning of the WFH transition were the norm. We experienced a slight backlog, but the right support practices and WFH-friendly policies have played a critical role in shoring up productivity and commitment away from the office environment." DiacriTech's staff came up with suggestions and ideas to improve workflow, including ways to better utilize production tools through VPN, obtain clients' approval to use low-resolution proofs to speed up communication, and provide deep-link emails with the option of editing content online.

"Our staff is definitely our strength, and, without them, this transition to WFH would not be as seamless," says Prakash, of Lapiz Digital, pointing out that the company's sales and business development activities took a back seat for several weeks in the early stages. "The priority was in setting up an internal system to keep in constant touch with all staff and do weekly checks on them and their immediate family's health and well-being. Now, our daily review meetings to check things like productivity and quality, customer feedback, and resource utilization, for instance, are happening virtually per normal office conditions." A program was also rolled out so that managers could get to know the families of their team members.

Keeping the operations running smoothly for staff and clients tops the to-do list at Newgen KnowledgeWorks, says Subhash Panicker, v-p of human resources. "The shift to WFH is more about a state of mind rather than any specific piece of technology or infrastructure," Panicker says. "Technology is, of course, important, but rather than using tools to micromanage working



A.R.M. Gopinath (l.) and Mahesh Balakrishnan of DiacriTech hours or track staff activities, we prefer to give people the freedom to work when it is best for them and their clients."

Constant client engagement has seen Newgen staff at all levels forming deeper connections with clients and international colleagues. "For a copy editor to sit face-to-face, albeit via a video screen, with their editorial counterpart on the other side of the world has fostered more collaboration than we ever achieved through email alone," Panicker says.

Keeping business on an even keel

When it came to managing a whole WFH team at Lapiz Digital, "the first few days were rather confusing," Prakash says. "But videoconferencing glitches were surprisingly few, and we quickly got used to the household noises in the background. Online audio/video meetings are now the norm, despite the initial skepticism on its usage and effectiveness. Going forward, even if things go back to pre-pandemic times, virtual meetings may replace some of our business travels."

The lack of differentiation between WFH and WFO (work from office) is proving to be a major advantage at Lapiz Digital. "Our productivity and quality benchmarks remain the same whether we work from home separately or within the same office building together," says Prakash, whose remote team recently transitioned a complex project on online training sessions. "We do not ask clients for longer turnaround time or leniency in meeting their requirements. In fact, with our staff being able to operate in flexi-shifts and spend less time commuting, we actually see our turnaround time improving across projects when compared to WFO."

The tweaking of tools and solutions to suit the WFH environment was minimal, says V. Bharathram, president of Lapiz Digital. "Over the years, we have developed and refined workflow solutions for specific journal and book publishing, and as these solutions reside in the cloud, they are accessible from anywhere at any time," he says.

Now that employees are working remotely, finding the best ways to support publishing clients is crucial for digital solutions vendors. "Some publishers relied on their vendors to ship paper proofs, but now everything has to be digital whether the publisher is going fully digital or not," says Carey, of Westchester Publishing Services, whose team had put a client portal in place and utilized Dropbox and digital proofs long before the pandemic started. "But not all clients are as conversant with these types of tools or in working in a digital-only distributed environment, and these have prompted us to provide training to some clients so that they could adapt these tools for internal use or adopt these for their author collaboration. We continue to provide such training whenever it is needed with new clients."

DiacriTech Embraces New Norms to Forge Ahead

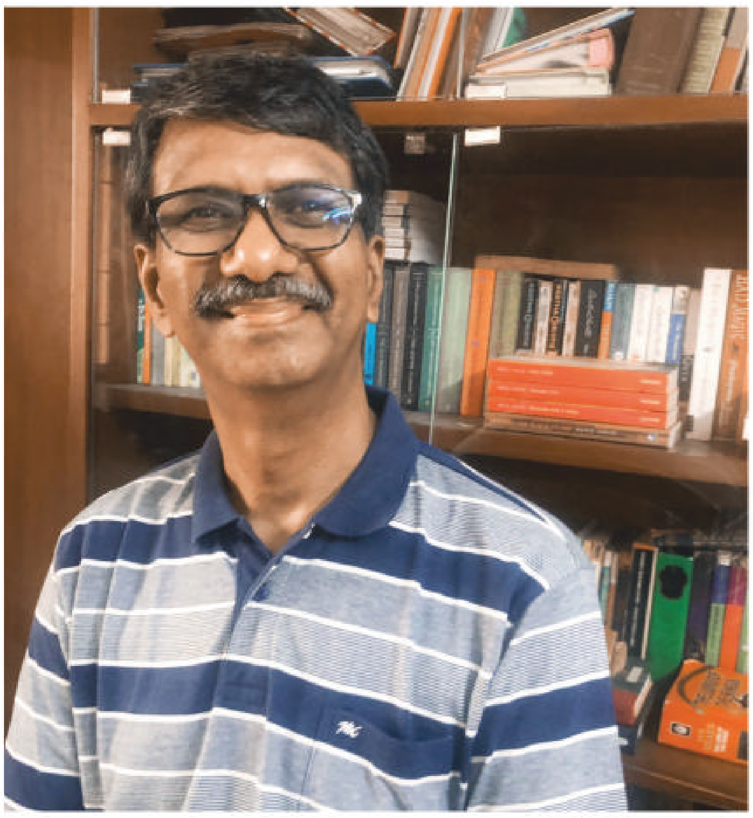
Recent months have seen numerous updates to XEditPro Publishing Suite, DiacriTech's unified editorial and production platform, including extensive support for InDesign's typesetting system and the tracking of all project-related changes down to chapter level. The enhanced XEditPro equation editing feature, for instance, enables autoconversion of mathematical equations in an input Word document into editable MathML. XEditPro's equation editor also accepts LaTeX code as input and converts it accordingly. "We have built in the capability to create links to assessments from a chapter and insert video links—such as YouTube—aside from the usual MP3, MP4, and HTML5 assets," executive v-p A.R.M. Gopinath says.

XEditPro, a single cloud-/browser-based platform for all processes from receipt of manuscript to final delivery, suits the WFH environment to a T. It brings authors, editors, and layout specialists together in one secure workflow-enabled platform for seamless collaboration. Increased automation, AI, and natural language processing (NLP) tools further enhance user experience and productivity.

Client-designated freelancers and editors can work on specified titles securely and independently on XEditPro. A typical user in the editorial and production processes can use the publishing platform effectively without specific technical know-how. "The familiar Word-like editing interface lends comfort to all users," executive v-p Mahesh Balakrishnan says. "These and many automated features eliminate the need for in-person training, which supports the WFH environment and physical distancing." He adds: "XEditPro, which allows tracking of key performance indicators of a project, specifically addresses the performance metrics and motivation challenges inherent in the WFH environment."

Meanwhile, the Internet of Things and Web Augmented Reality, or Web AR, beckon. "We are working on one innovative project that allows video communication between a HoloLens wearer and a PC user in factories or industrial zones," Gopinath says, adding that the app can be used in areas such as basic maintenance service. "For instance, instead of deploying a service technician, an engineer can now use this app from home to provide step-by-step guidance to a customer who has problems using a particular device or appliance," he says. "It supports the need for distancing during these pandemic times."

Immersive Gaze—DiacriTech's product for augmented reality (AR)/virtual reality (VR)/mixed reality (MR)—continues to evolve. "Publishers are pushing back on VR/MR mostly because of the pandemic, and not merely to cut costs," Balakrishnan says. "The usage of virtual headsets is not viable because the same headset is used by multiple students and may then spread the coronavirus. However, some publishing clients find the AR apps perfect for home-based classes to make learning more interesting and less isolating, and so we are set to roll out more AR projects this year."



V. Bharathram, president of Lapiz Digital Services

Paying attention to social issues

Two topics have come to the fore in recent weeks, Carey says: "One is about addressing the questions of racism and representation raised by the Black Lives Matter movement in the U.S. The ongoing discourse, hopefully, will result in better representation in publishing companies, as well as within the content produced by our industry. For now, many publishers are requesting statements from their vendors on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and are working within their own organization to better address these issues as well."

Then there is the issue of empathy within the workplace. "Most companies operating nine-to-five have to adapt to the new realities of WFH, including blurred personal and professional barriers, remote supervision, and social isolation," Carey says. "It is up to the employer to empathize on these challenges and work to make WFH viable through a collaborative way and not in a top-down manner." Carey says his team has seen productivity improved in numerous ways despite working remotely.

WFH has certainly created challenges with childcare while changing the ways that busy households are organized, says Panicker, of Newgen KnowledgeWorks. "One of the most important changes we made in moving to WFH mode was to increase our infrastructure capacity so that we can guarantee a productive and responsive system whenever our staff need to work," Panicker says. "Our people understand what is expected of them, and we work hard to have simple and well-defined processes that are supported by good and intuitive technology so that we can focus entirely on good business outcomes for our clients."

Recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and training programs have to be reengineered to support the new reality, as well.

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"Long-term support for flexible working hours and WFH is crucial to our future success," Panicker says. "We are, and will continue to be, a 'work from anywhere' employer. In fact, many of our staff in India and other sites have relocated to be closer to family and away from urban areas."

Tweaking for better efficiencies

The need for collaborative and agile processes during WFH mode is undeniable. Newgen KnowledgeWorks' end-to-end journal-management system, PubKit, meets such criteria. "PubKit enables not only collaboration between various stakeholders in the publishing process but also integration of systems," says Jo Bottrill, managing director of operations in the U.K. and U.S. "As an inherently flexible and open platform, PubKit allows us to move content and metadata to various tools and then push them to our publishing client's in-house system as well as those from third-party suppliers as the project moves along," Bottrill says. "This helps to ensure that everything is kept up-to-date, rework is reduced, and efforts are not duplicated. Ultimately it supports a more timely and effective publishing program."

The marked increase in demand for digital development services—from repurposing K–12 content for online learning to building an automated e-book-only workflow—requires a different platform. "Facilitating faster digital content production is an essential factor in shoring up publisher revenues," Bottrill says. "They need to monetize content quickly, but also to bring valuable scholarly and education information to the international community faster. Our ResearchPad tool, for instance, helps disseminate quality open access content to the global community in a user-friendly and multiplatform environment."

Though there is less demand, particularly from trade publishers, for services related to print products than there had been before the pandemic, there has been little change in the type of services sought by educational publishers. "In general, publishers want more automation to increase efficiencies by reducing the amount of manual work, the number of handoffs, and other dependencies within the publishing workflow itself," DiacriTech's executive v-p Mahesh Balakrishnan says. "They are looking into automated publishing tools to support content authoring of different formats, including formulaic math, interactivities, and animations. They are also interested in creating online educational apps that provide access to lessons, which are most relevant to these times of virtual learning and uncertainties pertaining to classroom reopenings."

The DiacriTech team is monitoring and assimilating client requirements that arise from pandemic-related restrictions

Online Products Are Growing Fast at Lapiz Digital

Though a reduction in business is inevitable during the pandemic, there have been no project cancellations at Lapiz Digital so far. "Overall, our publishing business is doing well," says president V. Bharathram, whose team has continued to provide VR/MR and niche analytics services to several health-care clients. "We have added two European university presses and several small- and medium-sized journal publishers from the Middle East and Africa to our client roster recently. We have not, however, offered niche analytics services to publishers yet. But, going forward, we are expanding our capabilities in software-related services for both health-care and publishing verticals."

The team saw an uptick in e-book conversions in recent weeks. "Traditional typesetting for educational publishing is down," Bharathram says. "But there is a surge in inquiries for development of online products, including lessons, assessments, app developments, responsive HTML, and conversions to XML, PowerPoint, and e-book formats." He adds: "Quality and turnaround time are the major differentiators during this WFH environment, and we are going all out to deliver on both."

With classrooms going digital, Bharathram is seeing a significant increase in demand for online testing and assessments from both the overseas and domestic markets. His team completed a large lesson and assessment project—designed and cost-effectively built using open source software—for one U.S. client just prior to the shutdown in March. "But, even before the pandemic outbreak, adoption and integration of IT in education was already there," says Bharathram, who reports huge demand for online training courseware from corporate clients. "This pandemic essentially accelerates the implementation of online education."

"As far as full-service publishing projects are concerned, we have benefited from our internal workflow solution," Bharathram says. "The shift to WFH has necessitated minor modifications and tweaks to the software and workflow, mostly to accommodate and better allocate resource availability. So we now have a fully collaborative tool that is integrated with our production management system."

Executing complex software projects is particularly challenging in this WFH situation. "Understanding client requirements is crucial to the success of any project," says Bharathram, who is focused on marketing current services to regions where Lapiz Digital does not yet have a major presence instead of launching new initiatives during this economic slowdown. "But it is also equally crucial for the development team, working remotely, to pass the correct and relevant instructions to team members who are carrying out the work from different locations. Without in-person meetings, clear communication and precise coordination take on even greater importance. More thrust will be given to online digitization services while we continue to help clients with cost effective solutions for their projects."

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Jo Bottrill, managing director of Newgen KnowledgeWorks in the U.K. and U.S.

and new norms. "We are customizing the tools and outputs from our XEditPro publishing platform to match rising demand for digital products and new marketing needs," Balakrishnan says. "For instance, authors will benefit from a complete electronic workflow with reduced manual intervention, while publishers will need metadata that is captured at a granular level and rendered automatically in EPUB to enhance content discoverability."

With new tweaks to XEditPro, Balakrishnan and his team are also making it easy for publishers to use the platform to meet the needs of their end users. "One client who previously had no inclination to create online resources is now generating a whole new revenue stream within a short period of time using XEditPro," Balakrishnan says.

Monitoring business needs and trends

Cybersecurity is the topic du jour in the pandemic era. "It has gained momentum after a series of breaches," says Bharathram, of Lapiz Digital. "With WFH the new norm and people connecting to business networks from home, multifactor authentication practices are required to identify and allow access. Add rising hacking activities, and it becomes imperative to have in place a foolproof security infrastructure. Implementing solutions such as Zero Trust, VDI infrastructure, and adaptive authentication to manage remote users is essential."

When the initial lockdown occurred, WFH security options

Newgen KnowledgeWorks Offers Enhanced Collaborative Tools

The rollout of Newgen KnowledgeWorks' end-to-end workflow management system, PubKit, is now complete. "Projects across different segments are benefiting from its improved efficiency," says Jo Bottrill, managing director of operations in the U.K. and U.S. "We continue to drive further automation in handovers between teams, metadata processing, and the addition of dynamic autoscheduling. New file management functions, autoingestion of projects, and freelancer management are some of the recent enhancements."

Clients are now able to run files in various formats right from the browser using RedShift. "This publishing platform has new autostyling functions, in-browser editing, and the option to output templated covers and marketing assets—all from one single source of content and metadata," Bottrill says, adding that an upcoming release will incorporate additional support for accessibility standards, including alt-text processing.

The disruption to the print supply chain has seen heightened interest in Nova, the company's e-book distribution platform. "Nova allows publishers of all sizes to monetize their digital content across books and journals," Bottrill says. "Its flexible interface supports content delivered in book, issue, chapter, and article formats, enabling publishers and subscribers to customize collections and collect valuable consumer data. Nova's ability to allow users to flexibly consume content across all formats, as well as its support for note-taking, easy citations, and offline reading, make it a one-stop shop for many publishers."

All Newgen KnowledgeWorks' platforms allow users to access the tools and content from anywhere, Bottrill says. "Increased automation supports not only the new WFH reality but also enables publishers to respond to print supply chain disruption," he adds. "Now, more than ever before, publishers need to respond quickly to a rapidly changing situation. PubKit's dynamic autoscheduling feature, for instance, helps to keep the content workflow on track and cuts out unnecessary slack in schedules. Our automated composition tools also put the publisher in control of the corrections process by removing the need for lengthy rounds of correction."

Deeper integration of tools and platforms to further shorten production times while improving consistency and efficiency is the company's goal for the next 12 months. "The deployment of automation will continue to play an important role, and tools such as our newly updated online proofing system, Impact, will drive that even further," Bottrill says.

With technology has come a shift in workflow and mindset. "Our goal to produce content from a single source often requires editorial and production staff—as well as publishers and their authors—to work in different ways," Bottrill says. "So we are focused not only on technology, but also on supporting publishers in redesigning their workflows."

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were one major issue that Lapiz Digital faced. “We used third-party cloud-based tools to maintain data integrity and confidentiality,” Bharathram says. “The first week was a challenge in setting up the IT infrastructure for team members, especially in getting the right internet options. Thus far, everything is working well and we have met all delivery schedules for our projects despite the lockdown and ensuing WFH confusion.”

Automation continues to be a hot topic in content creation and production at Newgen KnowledgeWorks, Bottrill says. “Boundaries are blurring as digital solutions vendors take on more of the product development and creation process while editorial staff—from vendor’s and client’s side—become increasingly equipped with the tools to drive the production process as well as editorial functions,” he adds. This, Bottrill says, has brought “a renewed focus to user experience to make sure that all our tools are intuitive and that the entire workflow depends only on those processes that truly add value for the end user.”

Revenues from audio content have been a particularly important lifeline to publishers facing market disruption, says Bottrill, whose team offers recording and production services. “These audio services support digital learning content for K–12 educators, as well as more traditional audiobook publishing,” Bottrill says. “By combining print, digital, and audio production together, Newgen KnowledgeWorks is able to provide a truly end-to-end service, which is not only efficient but also ensures that content hits the market sooner.”

Tyler Carey, chief revenue officer at Westchester Publishing Services

Expanding Business at Westchester Publishing Services

The pandemic has added a sense of urgency to the continued development of the cloud-based portal used by Westchester Publishing Services to best suit clients and internal needs, chief revenue officer Tyler Carey says. “Clients can use the Dropbox interface within the portal to see all versions of each asset, engage with the project and schedule, and share direct Dropbox links to content with their staff and authors,” he adds. “We are actively customizing it to specific client workflows as needed, making it more versatile than many off-the-shelf tools—and available to our clients at no cost.”

Westchester’s client roster is growing despite the slowed economy, with 2020 set to be the company’s biggest year yet, Carey says. West Margin Press, RosettaBooks, Berghahn Books, Stonesong Digital, and educational content providers such as CareerPath and Lorenz Educational Press are some of the new clients. “We are seeing growth with existing partnerships—Macmillan, Princeton University Press, MIT Press, for instance—that go beyond the type of work we had historically done together,” Carey says.

The demand for quality editorial services is rising. “Even trade publishers that normally keep copyediting in-house or have a limited number of freelancers are moving work to us in order to achieve a reliable and steady resource at a time when not all contributors and freelancers are able to support a digital workflow,” says Carey, whose team is creating more digital learning content for publishers and edtech providers.

“We provide additional lessons and assessments to expand the offerings that our clients already have,” Carey says. “Some clients are adapting to new platforms like Learnosity, which we have extensive history in helping publishers migrate their content to. Others, upon finding themselves selling an existing library of content that may not have been updated in a long time, are asking us to review the currency of their backlist, as well as to ensure that the older content addresses emerging needs on diversity, equity, and inclusion.”

The digital tools and processes implemented have made the WFH transition painless for 51-year-old Westchester. “We proactively pursued a partnership with Dropbox a few years ago because we saw the need for a client-centric platform with easy asset-management options, and to add publication-specific information and functionality on top of that through our client portal,” Carey says. “This enables us to easily ramp up for projects with our larger clients and establish variant workflows with the nearly 250 publishers we now serve. It means that we have alternate options in place to serve each new client instead of making them adhere to an off-the-shelf solution that may not solve the issues they face during these trying times.”

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The demand for engaging and interactive content for online educational curricula is rising. “The same uptick is also seen for apps that incorporate digital learning assets, practice assessments, content authoring system, and e-book reader functionalities,” says Gopinath, of DiacriTech. “Growing requests for educational web portals that offer PDF e-reader apps compatible with mobile devices—that allow students to view allocated subject PDF pertaining to their grade—are indications of an urgent shift towards online content.”

Some publishers are busy incorporating hub-based content on dealing with the pandemic and its consequences. “LMS training materials, content porting, and testing on platforms is on a surge,” Gopinath says. “The same goes for content creation and modifications to existing products. We have been providing videos to support surveys and GFX content—incorporating infographics with video—to support research relevant to the current pandemic. Assessments, work sheets, and additional learning materials that are suitable for offline deployment but are electronically delivered in a secure environment are in now.”

More Westchester Publishing Services clients are delving into their backlists and putting together print-on-demand files, or adapting older academic content into XML and HTML5, Carey says. “Whether it is straight text or fixed-layout EPUBs, cookbooks or children’s titles, there is a much higher demand for digital conversion,” he adds. “Our teams have been working with different and less-common types of incoming files, and we even established a partnership with a scanning operation should a publisher have only hard copies available.”

Which brings us to this: business (and life), whether in WFH or WFO mode, does go on. Recent acquisitions, such as HighWire (by MPS Limited) or Cenveo Publisher Services/Cenveo Learning (by CJK Group), highlight the ongoing tech-centric strategy to expand digital platform offerings, diversify distribution channels, and increase resources. For vendors and publishers, digital competencies and transformation make all the difference to the bottom line during this pandemic waiting game—and beyond. So stay agile and adopt digital, or go broke. ■

This coverage is also available online at **publishersweekly.com/digitalsolutions2020.**

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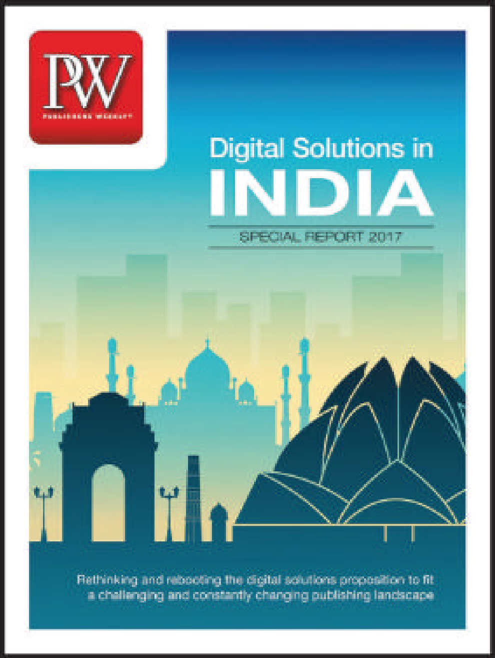
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Open Arms

For novelist Priya Basil, this strange moment has proven an ideal fit for her new book about the power of hospitality

By Luisa Weiss

It's a sweltering August morning in Berlin, and Priya Basil is sitting outside a café in Mitte sipping an apple-carrot-ginger juice when a young woman stops to greet her effusively.

The young woman, Carolina Assad, is the managing director of Wir Schaffen Das, the nonprofit organization that Basil helped found in 2015. It was named after Angela Merkel's exhortation, "We can do it," which was widely seen as an encouragement to Germans that they would be able to handle the large influx of refugees from Syria and other countries in the summer of 2015.

The two haven't seen each other in months due to the pandemic. Just before the virus reached Europe, Basil, the author of two novels and a novella, published her first work of nonfiction, *Be My Guest*, there. The book, which Knopf will release in the U.S. in November, is a philosophical meditation on the meaning of hospitality in forms large and small. It was directly inspired by Basil's experiences with that nonprofit, founded to help refugees who arrived in Berlin at the climax of the refugee crisis.

Basil's background—she was raised in Kenya in an Indian family and educated in England—bubbles up in her fiction. She deals with themes of love and family dynamics, often following characters in the Indian diaspora in Africa and the United Kingdom. Her first novel, 2008's *Ishq and Mushq*, which was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writer's Prize, among other accolades, follows a young Indian couple from Kenya who move to London. Her second novel, 2011's *The Obscure Logic of the Heart*, is a retelling of *Romeo and Juliet* featuring a devout Muslim girl and a Sikh boy, and set in Kenya and London.

She first moved to Berlin in 2002 and for the past few years has divided her life between London and the German capital. Married to a German journalist, she got her German residency status seven years ago. Then, in the wake of Brexit, she decided to apply for German citizenship. "I was shocked to find attachment to this country," Basil says, laughing. "Also [the process of getting citizenship] was so welcoming; it was powerful to feel wanted." Further cementing her sense of belonging, Basil and her husband, together with a group of acquaintances, built an apartment house, where they live in a kind of loose community with their neighbors.

Basil was raised in the insular Indian community in Kenya, where both her maternal and paternal sets of grandparents had moved to work on the Uganda Railway, which stretched from Mombasa to Lake Victoria. Her childhood experience of living in this bubble of Indian culture within Kenya was, in a sense, good preparation for her life as an Anglophone expat in Germany. In *Be My Guest*, Basil muses on her parents' attitudes as Indians in Kenya who had lived through British colonization in India as well as in Africa. "We saw ourselves as victims and therefore somehow absolved [ourselves] from any duty to others, however much worse their plight," she says. "On our tables there was plenty, but our minds were impoverished, our imaginations limited."

When Syrian refugees first started arriving in Germany in 2015, Basil writes in the book, she was chagrined to find within herself

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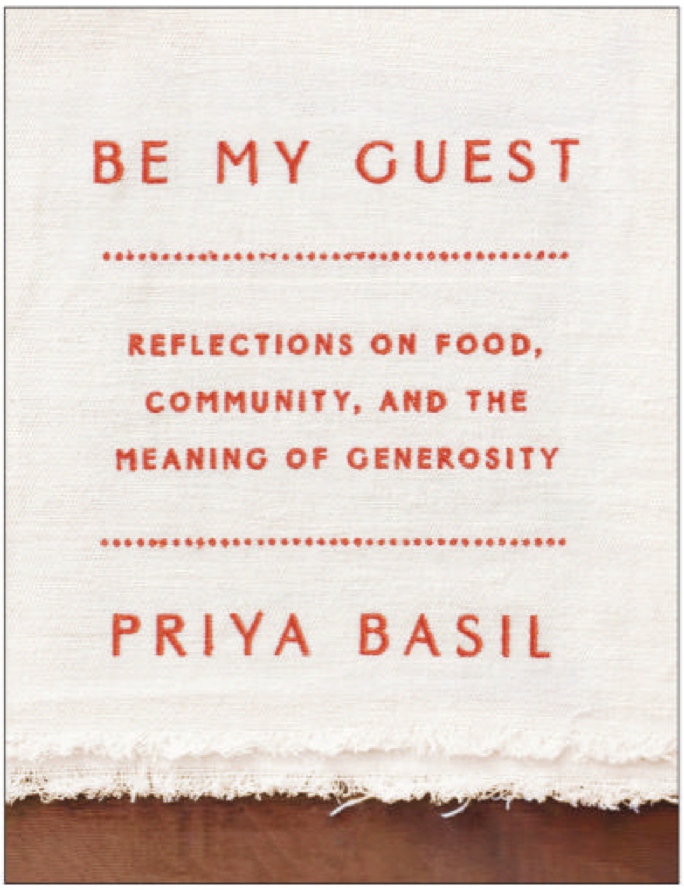
a disconcerting resistance and fear to their presence in her adopted country. What if the presence of all these new foreigners somehow chipped away at her own hard-won status as a foreign intellectual, even replacing her?

Be My Guest, a slim yet powerful collection of theories on hospitality both given and received, grapples with these questions. In it, Basil works through her own memories and experiences as a child, then a young woman hungering for the comfort of her mother's cooking, and, finally, a grown-up learning to extend generosity to those in need.

Basil ultimately quieted her anxieties about displacement by helping to found Wir Schaffen Das. She then went to work aiding refugees in their adjustment to their new lives in Berlin, doing things like organizing communal meals and pairing refugees with Germans to help them with bureaucratic appointments. The act of hospitality itself made Basil realize that the scarcity mindset wasn't serving her or anyone else. Helping others allowed her to see the link between hospitality, abundance, and generosity. Now it's clear to her that the big difference between her life in Berlin and her parents' in Kenya is that she's determined to reach out and bridge the gulf that can exist between longtime residents of a country and newcomers, especially those who arrive in desperation, having lost everything.


BE MY GUEST
REFLECTIONS ON FOOD, COMMUNITY, AND THE MEANING OF GENEROSITY
PRIYA BASIL

The Covid-19 pandemic has, of course, radically changed the global understanding of hospitality. Gone are the days of intimate dinner parties at home. Birthdays are now celebrated as drive-by parades. And perhaps the kindest thing people can do at the moment is keep their distance. Basil, however, has spotted a glimmer of light in all of this.

"The pandemic has given us the opportunity to think of different ways to be hospitable," she explains. She sees doctors, nurses, and other essential workers, who continue to do their jobs despite the risks, as embodying a type of uplifting hospitality. She sees this behavior as something that has made people look at each other differently. "We've been given an opportunity to find other ways of taking care and helping each other."

As soon as Basil realized that "you have to start thinking of your body in relation to other peoples' safety and bodies," she says, it became easier for her to inhabit this unsettling new reality. "At the beginning, there was this terrible feeling of everyone being a potential risk. I hated that feeling of being in the world, and I'm so glad that phase has passed. Now I want to only think of what I can do to help other people feel safe. I want to be healthy so that I can be a better citizen, a better friend, and a better daughter."

The pandemic has magnified the stark disparities between those who get taken care of, those who get to feel safe, and those who really don't, Basil says. She was surprised to find deep consolation in the fact that she now, in more ways than one, belongs to Germany, which has ably demonstrated the beneficial power of the hospitality of the state while shielding its citizens from the worst of the pandemic's effects. "It was really striking to feel suddenly grateful to a government that you're used to looking at really critically and complaining about all the time."

Despite the fact that she writes exclusively in English, Basil was surprised to discover that she has, over time, become more of a German writer than an English one. It is her life in Berlin, and her exposure to its history, that has given her the ability to reflect more critically on all of her past experiences. Her writing life, her inspiration, and the various work opportunities that have emerged from living in Berlin are emblematic of the beauty of hospitality itself, as they illustrate the ways in which hospitality enriches the lives of both host and guest.

Be My Guest came out in German before it was published in English, so Basil found herself doing press events in German, which was both exhilarating and anxiety-inducing. "Finally coming to grips with the mechanics of German was quite a challenge," she says. "It was really interesting, but agonizing as well." Basil sees herself as still learning the language, but feels like she's finally at a point where she can comfortably converse about most things. "It's a really magical moment when a foreign language becomes accessible. That's very motivating. I just never thought I'd be able to speak in German. I thought I'd understand more and maybe be able to read a bit."

The hardest thing for her was getting over the anxiety about making mistakes. "Once I was able to do that and just not care—that was a really important psychological barrier to overcome," Basil says. "This new place of being opened up for me, and it also gave me new eyes on English. Thinking about sentences and thinking about structure made me much more alert about writing in English. And that has changed the way I write. There's a certain freedom in English, a bit of looseness and ambiguity. The attention to every single word was something that I didn't have before." There is no better proof that the act of hospitality is a gift that goes both ways. ■

Luisa Weiss is a Berlin-based writer and translator; her most recent book is Classic German Baking *(Ten Speed).*

Reviews

Fiction

Super Host

Kate Russo. Putnam, $27 (368p) ISBN 978-0-593-18770-8

Russo follows the travails of a divorced London painter–turned–apartment host in her witty, enjoyable debut. At 55, Bennett Driscoll's paintings are no longer fashionable, and his career and private life have been derailed. To make ends meet—his gallery's director says she'll represent him again after he's dead—Bennett rents out his large suburban London house on AirBed, an Airbnb-like site, and sleeps in his studio. He once scoured the *Guardian* for reviews of his work; now he reads reviews of his hosting and relishes his long-coveted AirBed status as Super Host while processing his recent divorce and trying to connect with his 18-year-old daughter. Russo is good at portraying female characters, particularly a series of tenants whose stories structure the novel, and who each make an impact on Bennett. There's Alicia, a young American woman; Emma, an artist who rents the house with her husband; and Kirstie, an unhappy, failed hotelier. Russo plumbs the depths of her characters' cynicism, which has taught them that men are indecisive and women remain primarily objects of sexual interest, and that to be a successful artist one needs to keep producing what sells. Russo is a formidable talent, and readers will be eager to see what she does next. *(Feb.)*

★ Butter Honey Pig Bread

Francesca Ekwuyasi. Arsenal Pulp, $19.95 trade paper (320p) ISBN 978-1-55152-823-6

Ekwuyasi's magical debut delves into the reverberating effects of a Nigerian mother's choices on her twin daughters' lives. The stories of Kambirinachi and her daughters, Taiye and Kehinde, unfold in lyrical, emotionally affecting parallel narratives. As a girl, Kambirinachi knows herself to be an Ọgbanje, a spirit child in Igbo tradition who curses one's family by repeatedly dying and being born again. After moving through the cycle multiple times, Kambirinachi chooses to stay alive. As a grown woman, she leaves her home in Abeokuta to study art in Lagos and, throughout her life, must make a constant effort not to listen to the voices of her Kin calling her back toward death and warning her that "she will soon learn." Starved of her own mother's love—a woman who had three miscarriages and so saves all her affection for her husband—Kambirinachi loves deeply, first her father, then her husband, and finally her twins. At 18, Kehinde leaves for Montreal, determined to leave behind the source of a trauma that gradually comes to light, while Taiye settles in London. Both are caught up in the consequences of Kambirinachi's choice to resist her fate, and work to heal old wounds on a return visit to Lagos. Written in sizzling prose, Ekwuyasi's assured, inspired debut will impress fans of Akwaeke Emezi. *(Dec.)*

© TOM BUTLER

Kate Russo, daughter of novelist Richard Russo, serves up a witty debut novel, Super Host, *about a washed up artist (reviewed on this page).*

The Orchard

David Hopen. Ecco, $27.99 (480p) ISBN 978-0-06-297474-7

Hopen commingles religious philosophy and dangerous behavior in his ambitious debut. Aryeh, 17, has always felt somewhat alienated from his deeply devout orthodox Jewish community in Brooklyn's Borough Park, so when his father's job loss prompts a family move to southern Florida, Aryeh welcomes the opportunity to start over for senior year. He lands a coveted spot at elite Kol Neshama Academy, a modern Orthodox school whose students will undoubtedly drive their luxury cars all the way to the Ivy League. Despite his unfashionable attire and lack of social and academic sophistication, Aryeh is taken under the wing of the school's golden boy, Noah. Noah's risk-taking circle of friends in turn introduce Aryeh (soon redubbed Andrew) to the pleasures of secular life. Aryeh is especially fascinated by charismatic, emotionally complicated Evan, who has an emotional hold over Aryeh's love interest, Sophia, and the group test their faith with daring escapades such as midnight speedboat rides ("If you're the worthy one, you survive," Evan says, fast approaching a jetty). Later, experiments with LSD bring on visions of God. Aryeh's insecurities and longings are on full display in his insightful—if at times overwrought—narration. Though the students' lengthy philosophical and scriptural debates initially seem ponderous, their thematic connections become increasingly apparent as the novel nears its moving climax. This isn't your average campus novel, and despite its lumps, is all the better for it. *Agent: Emily Forland. Brandt & Hochman Literary. (Nov.)*

Lord the One You Love Is Sick

Kasey Thornton. Ig, $16.95 trade paper (228p) ISBN 978-1-63246-117-9

Thornton's brutal, moody debut collection crafts a tapestry of hidden secrets and cruel undercurrents in rural Bethany, N.C., revolving around the heroin overdose of troubled 23-year-old Gentry. "I Shall Not Wait" picks up with Gentry's lifelong best friend, Dale, a cop who abandoned his drug-dependent buddy, whose decline seemed unstoppable, "like a train barreling toward the weak spot in the tracks." Dale becomes psychologically unmoored by the guilt, while his wife wonders if their marriage will survive. "Valley of the Shadow" follows Gentry's mother, Nettie, following Gentry's death. She's angry and in mourning, left alone with her agoraphobic younger son, Ethan, who'd bonded over video games with Gentry. In "Trespasses," Ethan finds a new friend in Abigail, a neighbor who's been sexually abused by her father. More characters unravel with each successive story, which chronicle the deep and sprawling impact made by Gentry's death as inner lives are exposed, unlikely friendships are forged, and gossipy whispers persist at the local diner. Thornton taps the vernacular, attitudes, and prejudices of small Southern townsfolk with eerie precision. These stories collectively coalesce into a resonant, emotionally searing nexus of hard truths, buried secrets, and emotional pain that readers won't soon forget. Thornton's accomplished work is full of insights on its rural American setting and inhabitants' psychology. *(Nov.)*

The Dark Library

Cyrille Martinez, trans. from the French by Joseph Patrick Stancil. Coach House, $15.95 trade paper (160p) ISBN 978-1-55245-407-7

French writer and librarian Martinez (*The Sleepworker*) explores the purpose of libraries amid sweeping societal changes in this whimsical novel. An unnamed narrator visits his unnamed country's Great Library to find something new to read. Before arriving, the narrator explains the library's four towers: one for novels, one for sciences and humanities, one for rare items, and a fourth for "unclassifiables," the intention for which is "obscure... and their language bizarre." The narrator happens upon a title called the *Angry Young Book*, which literally begins speaking to him and tells a story about the Historian, one of the most dedicated literary minds in the country who donated his entire collection to the library, and then disappears. The Angry Young Book also shares its frustration over a general decline in readership and bemoans the gimmicky methods the library's management has been using to lure visitors. The dutiful, unnamed Red Librarian takes over the narration when a horde of "contractual readers" hired by the library appear and begin requesting titles at a breakneck pace as part of a secretive, and ultimately shocking, plan to save the library. Martinez tempers his satire with wit and quirky characters. This will delight fans of absurdist fiction. *(Nov.)*

The Peculiar Fate of Holly Banks

Julie Valerie. Lake Union, $14.95 trade paper (408p) ISBN 978-1-5420-0799-3

The second installment in the Village of Primm series (after *Holly Banks Full of Angst*) wraps a mystery in bubbly domestic fiction, to mixed results. Following Holly's move east with her husband and five-year-old daughter from Colorado to the fancy

[Q&A]

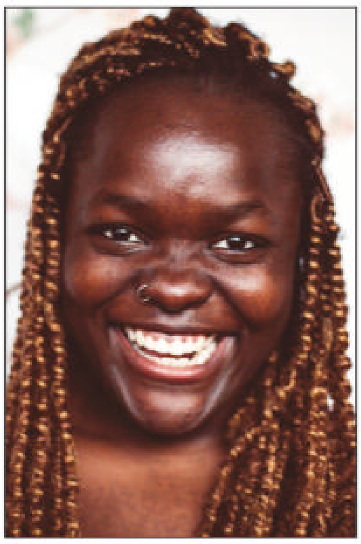
PW Talks with Francesca Ekwuyasi

Still Here, Still Queer

Ekwuyasi's *Butter Honey Pig Bread* (Arsenal Pulp, Dec; reviewed on p. 60) explores a cursed mother's complicated relationship with her daughters, as well as the lives of queer Nigerians.

What was the inspiration for Kambirinachi, an Ọgbanje who resists the curse befallen to her as a child to repeatedly die and be reborn, in order to have children of her own?

I was thinking of absent mothers, and mothers who do their best but their children don't recognize it. The Ọgbanje part is inspired by Wole Soyinka's poem "Abiku" [about an analogous Yoruba belief]. In European culture, if the mother doesn't feel connected to the baby, they say the baby is a changeling. In Nigerian culture, we think such a child is a witch. Maybe the child has behavioral issues, I don't know. I wanted to play with that.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Tell me about the role food plays in the novel.

While I was growing up, food was how my family showed affection. My grandmother doesn't say "I love you." She says, "Have you eaten?" My aunty in New York with whom I lived for a while, who was also very strict, she didn't want to say "I love you, I am thinking of you." She'd say, "I made shrimp jollof rice, come and eat." I wanted to include that with all the silence between [Kambirinachi's daughters, Taiye and Kehinde], and between Kehinde and her mother.

Nigeria criminalized same-sex relationships in 2014. Why was it important for you to write a book that makes space for queer people in Nigeria?

A lot of what has been written has been set in the diaspora. I do go home often, and every time I see queer people living their lives. We all know queer people, and I wanted to point it out. There are so many obviously queer Nigerians on social media and TV, but they never speak about it; they can't talk about their loves, can't talk about their experiences, can't talk about dating, sex even. I wanted to write it because I know it's real.

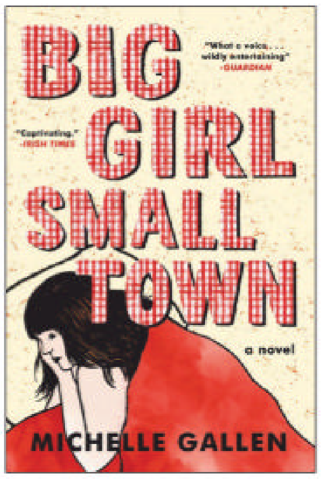
Taiye is accepting of her queer identity but she is a churchgoer. There's never any tension between her spirituality and her queer identity.

A lot of literature and movies seem to focus on characters trying to reconcile their queerness with their faith or trying to come out. The idea of coming out as a grand gesture does not happen in Nigerian culture, the way my North American friends do it. I wanted Taiye's main struggle to not be her queerness. It has more to do with her boundary issues and her trauma. On the flip side, it was important to show the struggle for a lot of Nigerian queers who have a spiritual leaning. My faith is very important to me and I am queer, and that's just a fact. There are people in my life whom I love dearly and my queerness causes so much tension. I wanted to show both sides: where it could be a big deal and then this character who doesn't need to do any reconciling.

—Chika Unigwe

★ Big Girl, Small Town

Michelle Gallen. Algonquin, $16.95 trade paper (320p) ISBN 978-1-64375-089-7


"What a voice. . . wildly entertaining" –GUARDIAN
"Captivating." –IRISH TIMES
BIG GIRL SMALL TOWN
a novel
MICHELLE GALLEN

Gallen's sensational debut concerns Majella O'Neill, a 27-year-old on the autism spectrum who's learned how to mimic social cues. Majella lives with her irresponsible mother, Nuala, in the tiny fictional town of Aghybogey in Northern Ireland. Situated near the border, Aghybogey was once the site of clashes between the IRA and British soldiers, and the violence continues to haunt Majella's family in the present. Following the death of her IRA-affiliated uncle Bobby, Majella's once-doting dad, Gerard, starts to spend more time away from home. When the book opens, he's been missing for years, and everyone in town is talking about Majella's grandmother Maggie, who died after being beaten in her own home during a break-in. Majella's no stranger to having her family be the subject of gossip, as Nuala's destructive behavior and craving for attention are often exacerbated by her drinking and Majella often ends up playing the mom. Gallen does a great job of teasing out the details surrounding Maggie's death through Majella's conversations with family members and her customers at the fish and chips shop where she works. Gallen's also an expert at mixing moments of emotional intensity with mundane episodes. The plot unfolds in a series of vignettes that expand on a list of Majella's likes (eating, *Dallas* DVDs, sex) and dislikes (noise, jokes, fashion), which make her outlook irresistible. Gallen's effortless immersion into a gritty, endlessly bittersweet world packs a dizzying punch. *(Dec.)*

Village of Primm, family dog Struggle begins digging up clues to a long-standing town mystery involving a stolen astrolabe and the true borders of the town. The story line plays out against Holly's efforts to organize her home, from dumping items in "panic baskets" to keeping a bullet journal and launching a production company out of a "she shed." Along the way, she works to ensure her daughter is on par with the other kindergartners at Primm Academy, deals with her mother's health woes, and tries to understand why her husband is acting unsupportive. These interludes, connected by the idea that "the life-changing magic of knowing life was messy and being good with it," vie for attention in the shambolic plot involving intrigue and town rivalries over the astrolabe's missing tympana. The novel succeeds in its depiction of women's emotional labor, which Holly recognizes is undervalued compared to her husband's career. Readers who can get past the chaotic plot will appreciate the way Valerie handles her themes of luck, fate, and perseverance. *Agent: Joëlle Delbourgo, Joëlle Delbourgo Assoc. (Nov.)*

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Before the Coffee Gets Cold

Toshikazu Kawaguchi, trans. from the Japanese by Geoffrey Trousselot. Hanover Square, $19.99 (240p) ISBN 978-1-335-43099-1

Japanese playwright Kawaguchi's evocative English-language debut is set in a tiny Tokyo café where time travel is possible. In four connected tales, lovers and family members take turns sitting in the chair that allows a person to travel back in time for only as long as it takes a single cup of coffee to cool. In "Husband and Wife," a nurse goes back in time to visit her husband before his Alzheimer's erased her from his memory; in "The Sisters," a woman visits her younger sister, who died in an accident while trying to visit her, to apologize for not seeing her. Kawaguchi's characters embark on lo-fi, emotional journeys unburdened by the technicalities often found in time travel fiction—notably, they are unable to change the present. The characters learn, though, that even though people don't return to a changed present, they return "with a changed heart." Kawaguchi's tender look at the beauty of passing things, adapted from one of his plays, makes for an affecting, deeply immersive journey into the desire to hold onto the past. This wondrous tale will move readers. *(Nov.)*

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Surviving the Fatherland

Annette Oppenlander. Oppenlander, $4.99 e-book (372p) ASIN B06WD8GJ3P

Oppenlander's wrenching latest (after *47 Days*) follows two young Germans from their childhood during WWII in Solingen to their new lives in the 1950s. Parallel narratives are told by Lilly Kronen, aged seven in 1940, and Gunter Schmidt, 11. Their lives are first disrupted when their fathers enter the war, and challenges increase as rationing begins, followed by relentless carpet bombing. The horrors of war are continually thrust upon the children as they witness suffering and death, and when Gunter is mustered into the Hitler Youth program, he is reluctant to become a cog in the führer's evil machine. Starvation, desperation, and destruction of homes and human life force the children to grow up quickly, and it is only when Lilly and Gunter meet for the first time in 1949 that they allow themselves an emotional reprieve. The pace is as relentless as the war itself, with brutal descriptions of the savage life endured by German children.

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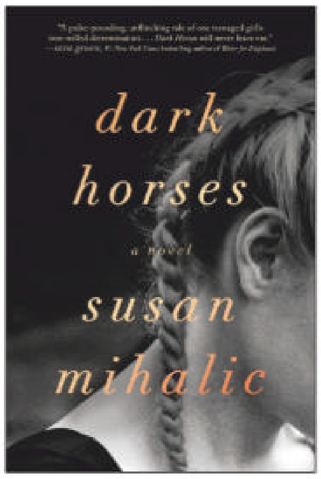
★ Dark Horses

Susan Mihalic. Scout, $27 (352p) ISBN 978-1-9821-3384-9



Mihalic's taut, bracing debut takes a daringly understated approach to its exploration of sexual abuse. Fifteen-year-old Roan Montgomery is hoping to ride her way to an equestrian Olympic championship, like her father before her, who serves as her coach, trainer, agent, and publicist. He's also been sexually abusing her since she was 10, which she's done her best to convince herself is a necessary evil in order to have the life she otherwise relishes. Compartmentalizing this aspect of her existence gets more difficult after she grows attracted to classmate Will Howard, a development that causes her father to become even more controlling. Mihalic has a firm grasp of the intricacies of competitive riding, and she grounds her narrative in a sense of the day by day, or even minute by minute, decisions involved in negotiating its dangers, which gives a reader an understanding of why Roan might hope the danger her father presents can also be contained and navigated. As the dread the novel evokes grows increasingly overwhelming, the reader is torn between that perspective and the knowledge that, from an objective point of view, Roan is dealing with a monster. The novel takes every narrative hurdle as nimbly and astonishingly capably as Roan does the courses she rides. This is a powerhouse. *(Feb.)*

The excruciating atrocities of WWII are far-reaching, as Lilly learns in 1945 of the death marches from concentration camps. This type of raw, articulate, history-based storytelling pays homage to the war children who bore witness while struggling to survive. *(Self-published)*

Poetry

★ Conjure

Rae Armantrout. Wesleyan Univ., $15.95 trade paper (152p) ISBN 978-0-8195-7997-3

Pulitzer Prize winner Armantrout (*Wobble*) offers a glimpse into her visionary inner world in her stunning 16th collection. Using language that is deceptively unadorned, Armantrout elevates the simple to the sublime. Her lines and stanzas are short, and statements like "A thing// must be recognizable/ in order to be/ a thing" reveal layers of meaning. Yet as intellectually penetrating as Armantrout can be, well-placed witticism and funny non sequiturs abound, invoking, for instance, "a Harpo Marx wig/ of virtual/ adjectives." Romantic attachment is given a surrealist treatment in "My Love," which ends with the evocative suggestion: "Let our eyelids/ lie flat// and spread/ like lily pads// beside themselves/ on a murky pond." In veiled allegorical references, Armantrout ventures into the political, as in "Where Will You Spend Eternity," in which she posits a choice between a God that could perform miracles but chooses not to, and the devil: "We're riveted/ by the Hell Show.// The devil plays a huckster. What will he come out with next?// Demons banished for dramatic effect/ are brought back to lobby// for poisoning children." Armantrout's verse is precise, pliant, even playful, which explains why she's both popular and critically respected. This deeply insightful collection has broad appeal. *(Oct.)*

A Fine Canopy

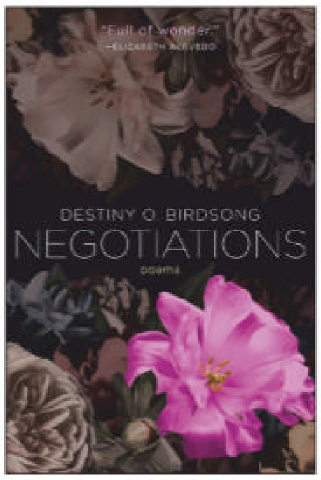
Alison Swan. Wayne State Univ., $16.99 trade paper (80p) ISBN 978-0-8143-4806-2

In this investigative, thoughtful debut, Swan carefully constructs an arc of grief and transformation through a wide range of poetic forms, including lyric strophes, tercets, couplets, and luminous fragments. The poems are unified by a recurring interest in the relationship between interior and exterior, and the porous boundary between the self and the world. As the book unfolds, the "red-winged blackbirds," "train whistles," and "passerines" that surround the speaker are subtly transformed by her wild flights of imagination. The speaker observes in "Succession," "Wildflowers/ replenishing a charred mountainside/ offer answers, ways of seeing and being/ that affirm silver linings: the fuchsia-blue/ flare of fireweed and the promise of cones." This poem reads as an exploration and interrogation of the way the author's mind projects onto external objects, and the myriad ways the world may be changed by the observer's psyche. "What sort of life inures one to the relief/ of knowing things we cannot see," Swan asks. Teasing out possible answers to these questions, Swan offers a subtle consideration on the natural world through accomplished poetic craft. *(Oct.)*

★ Negotiations

Destiny O. Birdsong. Tin House, $16.95 trade paper (152p) ISBN 978-1-951142-13-1

Birdsong debuts with an extraordinary string of immaculate, brutal narratives about systemic violence and racism, and their repercussions for Black American women. Her linguistic structure is kinetic and eclectic, with moments of macabre spectacle: "I want you to rot,// piece by piece, with everyone you know unwilling// to enter the room—not because they love you,// but because they just can't take the smell," as well as intrinsic dread: "your body is all asymptotes and fractals.// your own skin splinters in the dark/ from its dense heat. the pieces// come back together under a halo of prescriptions/ steeping your head in yellow light." Birdsong seamlessly shifts narrative perspectives, tones, and syntax, skillfully controlling enjambment and white space. Despite grim motifs, her work harnesses levity through sardonicism, riveting diatribe, and unromantic resilience: "I am destined to infuse/ survival with meaning," she writes, inviting the reader to "feel powerful enough to translate



each ache/ into inquiry.” Birdsong’s striking imagery and contagious fervor are a potent salve against apathy and foreboding. *(Oct.)*

Gold Cure

Ted Mathys. Coffee House, $16.95 trade paper (104p) ISBN 978-1-56689-581-1

The elegiac 4th collection from Mathys (*Null Set*) draws on the associative powers of gold: fake cures, busted boom towns, fracking sites, and goldfish (live and edible). Divided into five sections, “El Dorado” riffs on Illinois’s “City of Daffodils” (“Go, Big Gold”), layering the place with images: “FREE GOLD// estimates at the local pawnshop… I arrive in Eldorado, downstate Illinois.” “Key to the Kingdom,” a long poem in sections, is especially powerful—a driving narrative with glints of rhyme that moves a mythic female protagonist in Florida through political awakening as rampant police violence overwhelms her. Other poems feature the absurdity of family life: a daughter’s kindergarten “family project” is to build a leprechaun trap, for which “success requires manipulation/ of corrupted little men/ through acts of imagination.” The sonnet sequence “Shale Plays” touches on the largest natural gas shale deposits in the U.S. In these imaginative and linguistically impressive political poems, Mathys excavates with ironic wit while addressing untapped American fears. *(Sept.)*

★ How to Carry Water: Selected Poems of Lucille Clifton

Lucille Clifton, edited by Aracelis Girmay. BOA, $28 (278p) ISBN 978-1-950774-14-2

The life work of Clifton (1936–2010) forms an incandescent prayer for self-determination in this vital selected volume featuring 10 previously uncollected poems. Keenly edited and with a foreword by Girmay, the collection is a love letter to Black womanhood and motherhood, a historical record of violence and injustice against Black lives, and a reckoning with illness and abuse. Additionally, Girmay acknowledges a generation raised by “Ms. Lucille” and honors what Clifton saw as “a lineage of possibility.” As always, Clifton guides the reader with her characteristic wit, repetition, and rage—“i am i am i am furious”—her unadorned lines and complex, shifting metaphors (which Girmay aptly describes as a “strange, triple-eyed imagery”). In these poems, versions of Clifton past and future, third and first-person, are on a quest toward understanding selfhood. “i am lucille,” she writes, “which stands for light.” That light refracts through the book as an insistence on survival, contemplation of the political, and delight in the ordinary. Clifton’s poems are profound and powerful to behold. *(Sept.)*

★ Runaway

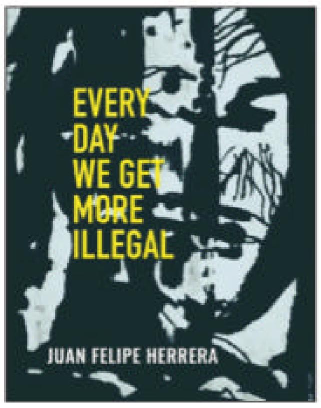
Jorie Graham. Ecco, $26.99 (96p) ISBN 978-0-0630-3670-3

Graham (*Fast*) begins her fifth decade of publishing with a bravura performance that probes the present for what the future will bring. In four sections of long-lined poems, many of which run two-to-four pages in length, moments that are seen, felt, and processed dazzle the reader. Graham sets the stage in the first line of the opening poem: “After the rain stops you can hear the rained-on.” The poem’s final image is both artificial and natural: “nothing to touch/ where the blinding white thins as the flash moves off/ what had been just the wide-flung yellow poppy.” Other poems include texting abbreviations (“u” and “yr”), and by the end, the reader’s world feels virtual. The second to last poem, “In the Nest,” has the speaker saying goodbye to “Mother”: “I tap/ again only to see your/ face erase itself//…An arrow points/ as I descend again/ into your room/ from the sensor// in your ceiling// watching u./ We think this is/ the past.” The book ends with a plea from the Earth to “Re-/ member me.” Through her signature urgent questioning, Graham makes plain the psychic and physical cost to humans of wrecking the Earth. *(Sept.)*

★ Every Day We Get More Illegal

Juan Felipe Herrera. City Lights, $14.95 trade paper (88p) ISBN 978-0-87286-828-1

The timely, urgent book from Herrera (*Notes on the Assemblage*) pays homage to the “migrant children,” “immigrant children,” those “who died in custody,” and those “separated on the road north,” highlighting societal issues while exploring the nuances of how silence operates within a larger political discourse. A variety of forms ranging from prose poems to lyric fragments work in service of social justice, as Herrera questions the willful refusal to listen to those ostracized by a dominant culture. In “Border Fever 105.7 degrees,” he writes: “why do you cry/ those are not screams you hear across this cage/ it is a symphony—the border guard says.” Herrera’s use of white space within the poetic line evokes the fragmentation of the individual voice within this “symphony” of injustice and suffering. Elsewhere, the importance of paying witness through writing becomes evident: “Leap/ every human being in the village is an ever-opening story/ yes you must write about each one—it is the bravest gesture/ you must.” Herrera’s formal versatility lends subtlety and nuance to essential political considerations. *(Sept.)*



★ Owed

Joshua Bennett. Penguin, $20 trade paper (96p) ISBN 978-0-14-313385-8

The powerful second book from Bennett (*The Sobbing School*) intertwines the author’s multifaceted professions as poet, performer, and professor through powerful, crisp poems that celebrate the complexity, joy, and heartbreak of the Black experience in America. “I’m pretty good/ at not loving/ anything enough/ to fear its ruin./ The cruel speed/ of our guaranteed/ obsolescence suits/ me,” he writes in “Plural.” Packed with sounds that echo the rhythms and narrative form of performance poetry, the collection is divided into three sections, each containing a series of Bennett’s version of the ode, which is reclaimed as “owed.” This idea is echoed in his four poems titled “Reparation.” Bubbling under his Whitmanesque breadth and awe at the world around him is the danger of growing up Black in America: “we grew tired trying not to die.” In “The Book of Mycah,” dense blocks of text flesh out the frenetic pace and energy of the Brooklyn neighborhood where Mycah Dudley, “Son of Flatbush & roti & dollar vans bolting down the avenue after six,” was killed by police. With their joy, pain, and fierce descriptions of Black life in America, Bennett's poems are more necessary than ever. *(Sept.)*

Index of Haunted Houses

Adam O. Davis. Sarabande, $15.95 trade paper (72p) ISBN 978-1-946448-66-8

The elegiac debut from Davis is interested in haunting in all its forms. Davis wonders "how/ terrible the stars/ are," or why "We orphan// everything// we touch" in poems that catalogue and consider losses. The world of this collection is one of debt and desire, ghost stories and foreclosures, where "weather is a borrowed room." Yet these poems still offer delight in their alliteration and repetition. Writing of a "lack// of locks," or "lye/ and lollipop," or "lemonade light," Davis's work offers a respite of pleasure amid poems that ask what to do after "Wreckage." Subverting a common trope that associates ruin with nostalgia, Davis refuses to gloss what has been left behind, as he wonders what would have been "If we had been/ better and awake," and "If we had accounted." The ghosts of these poems are not just ghosts of blood and bodies, but of money, choices, and myths. This is a collection of stark witness and testimony, with a voice that manages to sing. *(Sept.)*

On the Way Out, Turn Off the Light

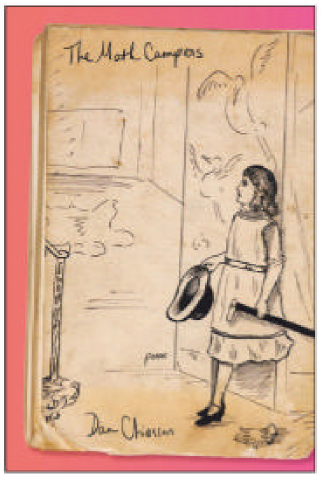
Marge Piercy. Knopf, $28 (208p) ISBN 978-0-593-31793-8

The multifaceted 20th collection from Piercy (*Made in Detroit*) touches on her identities as activist, teacher, cat lover, novelist, and poet. Among other topics, the poet confronts past pain, including failed marriages, recalling matter-of-factly, "earlier husbands were mixed bags;/ domesticity had its knives, needles,/ and pillows." She shifts from these past relationships to the sensual "heat-seeking missile" of her current lover: "Yes, we make love in bed and on/ the couch, but we also make love... / out of ink and kitty litter, out of hours/ and days given to each other not/ because we must but from desire." This tone contrasts starkly with her withering critique of current American politics: "We saw the cliff ahead/ We were warned/ We took everyone over." Yet even in this fraught political climate, Piercy celebrates the beauty of the world through the joy of her furry companions, the bounty of her garden grown from seeds that "arrive in the mail, packets of hope." At nearly 200 pages, even the most enthusiastic readers may occasionally find themselves fatigued. However, Piercy's collection is full of life, companionship, and the importance of advocating for others. *(Sept.)*

The Math Campers

Dan Chiasson. Knopf, $27 (128p) ISBN 978-0-593-31774-7

The meditative fifth collection from poet and critic Chiasson (*Bicentennial*) invites the reader to witness the poet's processes of creation, retrieval, and revision as a writer and dreamer, father and son. Framed by ekphrastic poems that gloss murals by David Teng Olsen adorning the walls of the poet's home, the book works by a loose Russian-doll principle: just as the murals reflect and refract details from the lives of the poet and his immediate family, so do these nested poems. As a teenager, the poet prays "that art/ would sometime send a ladder from the sky," and that he might "become the love child/ of Sylvia Plath, Ozzy, and Alex DeLarge." Years later, he finds himself "almost Ozzy, mansplaining/ to my eleven-year-old son the photo/ of a Louis Quatorze gilt dildo he found in our cloud." Intimations of social crisis and environmental disaster glow on the horizon, "Caskets line up for the slip-n-slide./ A collarbone surfboards down the alley./ Through the mudslide we humans wade," but the book centers on intimate dramas of adolescence, middle age, masculinity, and literary genealogy (poetic allusions from Milton and Eliot to Merrill and Bidart abound). These beautifully crafted poems are a memorable addition to Chiasson's singular oeuvre. *(Sept.)*



Mystery/Thriller

The System

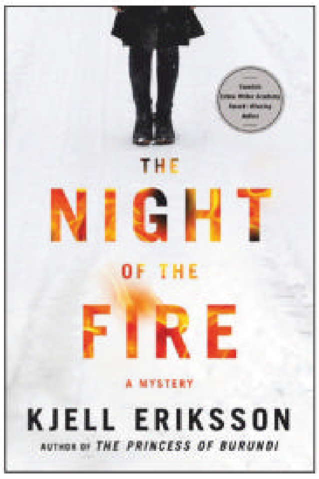
Ryan Gattis. MCD, $28 (432p) ISBN 978-0-374-13031-2

On the night of Dec. 6, 1993, heroin addict Augie Clark, a key player in this ambitious crime novel set in L.A. from Gattis (*Safe*), witnesses his dealer, Scrappy, getting shot outside her mother's house, and recognizes the shooter as gangbanger Wizard, but doesn't know who the guy with Wizard is. Clark saves Scrappy's life with some quick first aid, calls an ambulance—and pockets the gun used in the shooting left at the scene. The next day, Clark's parole officer finds the gun during a routine check on Clark, and blackmails him to finger Wizard and Wizard's usual accomplice, Dreamer, who has no felony record. The long, torturous road to trial offers a devastating portrait of the criminal network operating from jails, and shows how a person like Dreamer, the book's only sympathetic character, has little hope of justice. At times, this reads like a legal thriller, but with a lot more grit and sharper than usual characterization. Gattis expands the story dramatically through multiple first-person monologues from those on both sides of the criminal justice system. Too often, though, the monologues self-consciously strive for profundity in hard-to-swallow ways. Still, this is a story with great resonance for today. *Agent: Simon Lipskar, Writers House. (Dec.)*

★ The Night of the Fire

Kjell Eriksson, trans. from the Swedish by Paul Norlen. Minotaur, $27.99 (336p) ISBN 978-1-250-76614-4

Eriksson's exceptional eighth ensemble police procedural to be published in the U.S. (after 2016's *Stone Coffin*) spotlights Ann Lindell, who has quit the Violent Crimes Unit in Uppsala, Sweden, and started a new career as a cheese maker in the village of Rasbo. Then an unknown man calls Lindell's former office and insists on speaking with her. He says she's "the only one who listens," adding, "someone may die." Before a former colleague can pass on the message to Lindell, a woman dies in a fire that burns down an old school in Rasbo being used to house political and war refugees. Though the investigators don't find conclusive proof, the consensus is that it was arson. Lindell is drawn to the case, even as she's the target of an unknown enemy, who leaves a dead badger in her bed, its belly slit open. When she finally listens to a tape of the caller, the voice sounds familiar.



Eriksson adeptly teases whether there's a connection between the call and the fire, even as violence claims more lives. This artful blend of mystery and psychology is sure to please Scandinavian noir fans. *Agent: Anneli Høier, Copenhagen Literary (Denmark). (Nov.)*

A Christmas Resolution

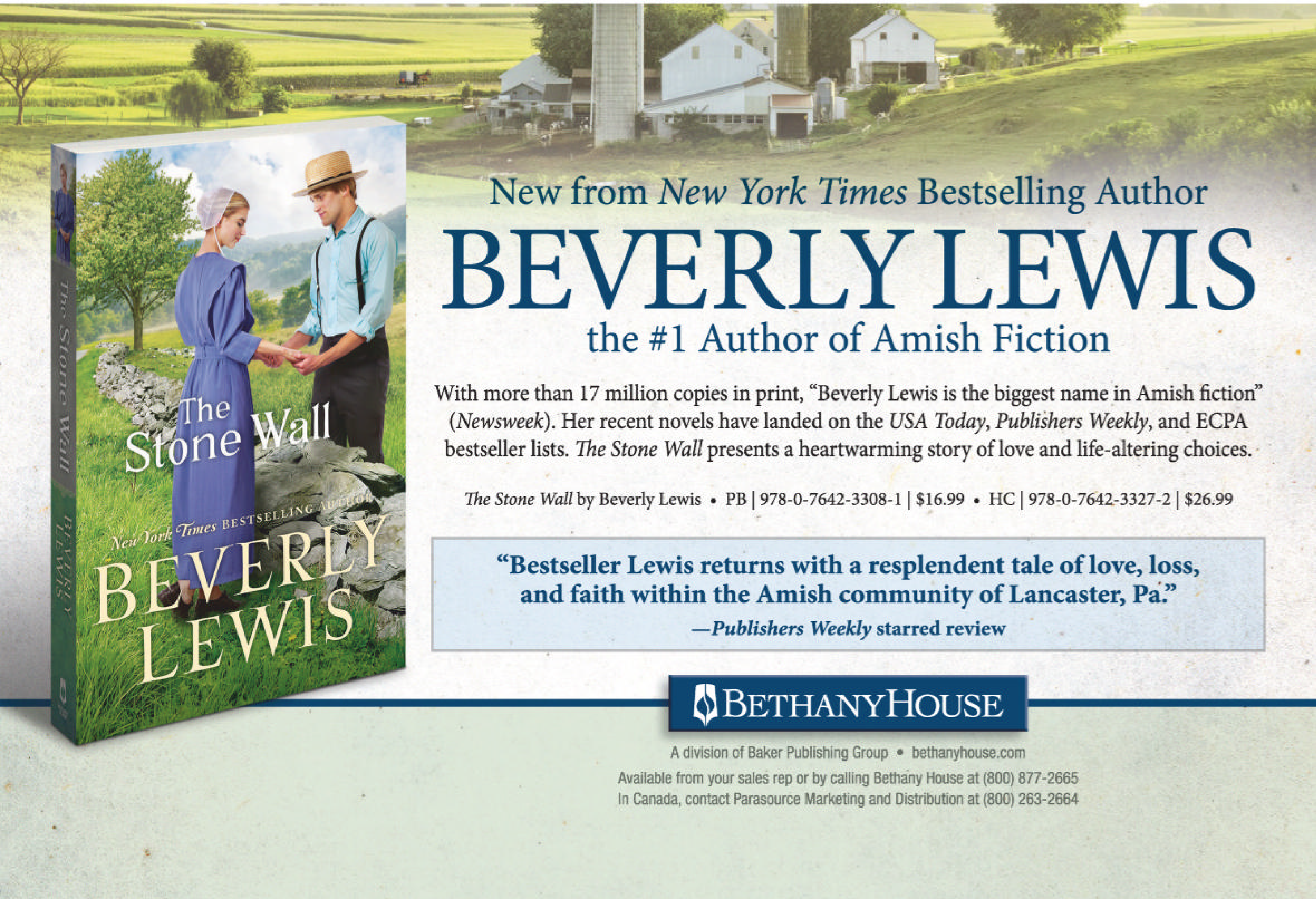
Anne Perry. Ballantine, $21 (192p) ISBN 978-0-593-12958-6

Set in December 1872, bestseller Perry's talky 18th Christmas novel focuses on John Hooper of the Thames River Police and his new wife, Celia, last seen in 2018's *Dark Tide Rising*. Celia is distressed to learn that Clementine Appleby plans to wed Seth Marlowe, a prominent member of their church. Though the impoverished Clementine is grateful for the chance to make a respectable marriage, Celia finds Marlowe cruel and controlling. Marlowe, meanwhile, has been receiving anonymous letters that suggest he helped drive his first wife to suicide. Based only on a vague reference Celia once made to his wife's suicide, Marlowe irrationally concludes that Celia is their source, and he threatens to expose a secret that could damage both Hoopers if she remains friends with Clementine. John attempts to defuse Marlowe's threats and save Clementine from danger by taking a brief leave from the police to investigate Marlowe's past. A vicar who hides his love for Clementine adds some charm, and the novel's musings on faith and forgiveness suit the Christmas season, but the glut of rhetorical questions and lack of dramatic action weaken its appeal. Perry has done better. *Agent: Donald Maass, Donald Maass Literary. (Nov.)*

Her Mother's Grave: A Detective Josie Quinn Mystery

Lisa Regan. Grand Central, $12.99 trade paper (320p) ISBN 978-1-5387-0124-9

Early in Regan's gripping if at times convoluted third Josie Quinn mystery (*The Girl with No Name*), Josie, the police chief of Denton, Pa., and her friends and colleagues, Lt. Noah Fraley and Det. Gretchen Palmer, are called to a crime scene adjacent to a rundown trailer park, where the remains of a teenage girl have been uncovered. Dental records identify the girl as Belinda Rose, who was murdered some 30 years earlier. The name is the same as that of Josie's abusive mother, whom she hasn't seen for many years. The teenager can't be her mother, so what unites the two Belindas? The team's attempts to reconstruct the murder victim's past trigger a series of memories for Josie of the times her mother abandoned her as a child. These memories become increasingly depraved and horrifying. Meanwhile, a malicious predator is posting rape fantasy sex requests on Craigslist under Josie's name.



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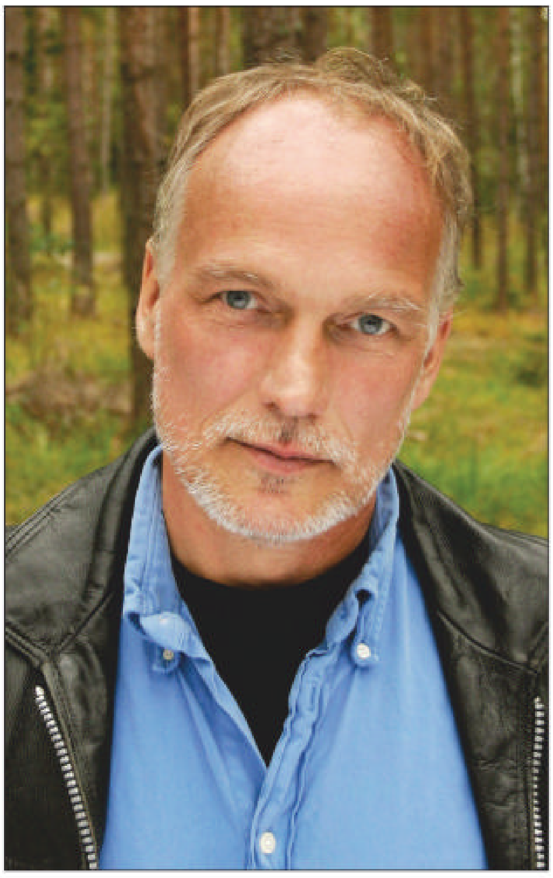
[Q&A]

PW TALKS WITH KJELL ERIKSSON

Crime in the Countryside

In Eriksson's *The Night of Fire* (Minotaur, Nov.; reviewed on p. 66), retired Swedish police inspector Ann Lindell probes a fatal arson.



© IDA LINDHAG

How has Lindell changed over the years?
When I created her, back in 1999, I had mainly written about men, and I wanted a change of perspective. It was a challenge to see whether I could succeed in portraying a female protagonist. Over the years, she became more disillusioned with her role as one of the good guys. She saw that the earlier ties between the police and the general public had broken. And her personal life became more complicated as well: she became a single mother after a one-night stand, and sank into alcoholism and social isolation. In my new book, I wanted her to be happy. In order to do that she had to change her job and leave her previous life. Because I love cheese, and local food production is an ever-more popular trend in Sweden, I made her a cheesemaker, so that she could work with something practical, where the brain and the hands work together.

Unlike a lot of Scandinavian noir, this work is set in the countryside. Why?
It enabled me to portray people who live on the fringe, socially, geographically, and economically. While living in the periphery can lead to ignorance, it can also lead to the opposite: a deep understanding of many aspects of life.

Does the city hold any attraction for you?
The hustle and bustle of the city and its enticing anonymity has its lure for me as well, but never the fashionable life. This is reflected in my writing, where I often put a lot more effort into developing the characters in my novels, rather than the plot. I never have a plan when I write my crime fiction, a strategy that is unthinkable for most writers.

In what way, if any, did your work as a gardener shape how you write fiction?
Working with your hands, like digging, sowing, or harvesting, is an activity that intellectuals tend to underestimate and often are unable to comprehend. I make room for these things, with their obvious influence on a person's choices in life and views on what constitutes a valuable and respectable line of work. This in turn creates a respect for those who perform the so-called basic, simple jobs. Even more importantly perhaps, this simple environment is reflected in my sparse language. —LENNY PICKER

Improbable but nonetheless intriguing connections between Josie and her family keep the pages turning. Despite the abundance of melodrama, readers will want to see how it all turns out. *Agent: Claire Bord, Bookouture. (Nov.)*

* * *

A Solitude of Wolverines

Alice Henderson. Morrow, $27.99 (320p) ISBN 978-0-06-298206-3

Idealistic biologist Alex Carter, the heroine of this middling series launch from Henderson (the Skyfire Saga), did an environmental study in Boston that thwarted plans to turn a tract of wetlands into commercial real estate. At the dedication ceremony for the nature preserve that was established instead, a man who lost money as a result is about to shoot Carter when an unknown sniper blows his head off. Traumatized by the violence, Carter leaps at a job offer to study wolverines in Montana on land donated to the Land Trust for Wildlife Conservation. After she arrives, someone leaves a note on her windshield warning her off, and someone else almost drives her off the road. She has apparently become the target of those who object to land being used to benefit animals rather than people. The stakes rise when Carter finds a badly injured man in the woods who disappears before she can return with help. A plot that strains credulity is matched by characters who lack depth. Readers interested in conservation-themed thrillers will be better served by the novels of Jon McGoran. *Agent: Alex Slater, Trident Media Group. (Nov.)*

* * *

Night in Tehran

Philip Kaplan. Melville House, $26.99 (320p) ISBN 978-1-61219-850-7

The Iranian revolution provides the backdrop for former U.S. ambassador Kaplan's ambitious debut. In 1978, faced with the imminent collapse of ally Iran on the brink of rebellion, the Carter administration's top spymaster dispatches diplomat David Weiseman to Tehran to identify an acceptable replacement for the U.S.-backed Shah. Weiseman sees shadows of his childhood escape from Nazi-controlled Austria as his political mission becomes a matter of survival. Partnered with a femme fatale journalist he suspects is French intelligence with her own agenda, he must build a network of trusted sources. As the country descends into chaos, Weiseman is exposed to multiple dangers from the established Iranian elite, military hardliners, and religious zealots, while he remains wary of the surreptitious maneuvering of his Middle Eastern and European partners. Kaplan dramatically shows how competing interests, foreign manipulation, and domestic brutality led to the violent overthrow of the last Persian monarch and one of the longest hostage crises on record. Not just a snapshot in time, this insightful novel is a powerful reminder of how Cold War strategies continue to reverberate through the modern global landscape. *Agent: Ronald Goldfarb, Goldfarb & Assoc. (Nov.)*

Murder Comes to Call

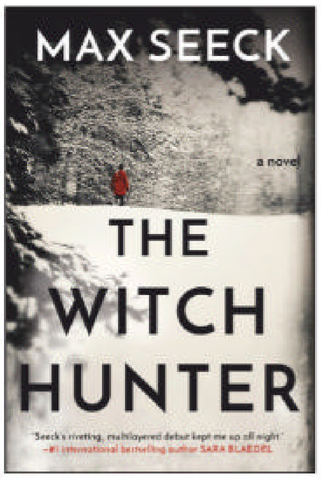
Jessica Ellicott. Kensington, $26 (304p) ISBN 978-1-4967-2484-7

In Ellicott's diverting fourth mystery set in the post–WWI English village of Walmsley Parva (after 2019's *Murder Cuts the Mustard*), glamorous American Beryl Helliwell and her practical British friend, Edwina Davenport, stumble across the body of Gordon Faraday, an unpopular local magistrate, at the foot of his staircase. The fledgling private inquiry agents find no shortage of potential perpetrators, including Faraday's widow and stepdaughter, who seem relieved at his death; his half-brother, who has a history of gambling and family estrangement; and an indigent Irish laborer who faces a jail sentence if he does not pay a fine. Faraday also may have surprised a burglar, as a rash of peculiar thefts has occurred in the village, including the snatching of completed census forms. Beryl and Edwina juggle the questioning of suspects, pumping of local gossips, hunting for the missing census materials, and jousting with their nemesis, Constable Doris Gibbs. This is a treat for readers who enjoy following the adventures of disparate yet complementary sleuths. *Agent: John Talbot, Talbot Fortune Agency. (Nov.)*

★ The Witch Hunter

Max Seeck, trans. from the Finnish by Kristian London. Berkley, $17 trade paper (400p) ISBN 978-0-593-19966-4

One winter night, Sgt. Jessica Niemi, the heroine of Finnish author Seeck's stellar debut, arrives at the home of author Roger Koponen and his wife, Maria, in an upscale Helsinki neighborhood, where shortly before two patrol officers found Maria dead at her dining room table, dressed in a black cocktail dress and her face "twisted up in a hysterical grin." Roger is across the country in Savonlinna, talking about the latest book in his bestselling Witch Hunt trilogy. The police chief there sets out to drive Roger home, but they never arrive—instead the car and two burned bodies are found the next day. Jessica and her team realize there are similarities between the deaths and the killings of witches by inquisitors described in Koponen's thrillers, leading them to expect more bodies. The police investigators have their own secrets, most of all Jessica herself, whose backstory Seeck skillfully reveals through her memories and in a separate story line set in the past. One twist follows another, baffling the police and readers alike. Seeck imbues this riveting procedural with a deliciously creepy undertone. Readers will be excited to see what Seeck does next. *Agent: Rhea Lyons, HG Literary. (Nov.)*


MAX SEECK
a novel
THE WITCH HUNTER
"Seeck's riveting, multilayered debut kept me up all night"
—#1 international bestselling author SARA BLAEDEL

On Deadly Tides: A Penny Brannigan Mystery

Elizabeth J. Duncan. Crooked Lane, $26.99 (288p) ISBN 978-1-64385-468-7

Duncan's solid 11th Penny Brannigan mystery (after 2019's *Remembering the Dead*) sends watercolorist Penny to the picturesque Welsh town of Beaumaris on the island of Anglesey for a painting course taught by Bill Ward, a TV personality turned artist. In a bar on her first night in Beaumaris, Penny meets Colin Campbell, a charming Canadian wildlife photographer, and Jessica Graham, an enthusiastic young reporter from New Zealand, who tells Penny she's on assignment to interview Ward, as well as research a New Zealand man's disappearance in Beaumaris seven years earlier. After Penny finds Jessica's body at the bottom of a cliff the next morning, the police decide it was an accidental fall. But Penny suspects foul play, and when Jessica's grief-stricken mother shows up to claim her daughter's body, Penny feels compelled to get involved. Penny's subsequent inquiries uncover a link between Jessica's death and the missing man. The romance that develops between her and Colin complements the sleuthing. Duncan skillfully takes her classic village mystery series in a new direction. *Agent: Dominick Abel, Dominick Abel Literary. (Nov.)*

Christmas Card Murder

Leslie Meier, Lee Hollis, and Peggy Ehrhart. Kensington, $26 (320p) ISBN 978-1-4967-2282-7

A Christmas card provides the starting point for each of the three entertaining novellas, which star a series protagonist from each of the authors, in this welcome anthology. In the title tale, bestseller Meier's Lucy Stone, a reporter for the Tinker's Cove, Maine, *Penny Saver*, is in the midst of renovating her home when she comes across a decades-old Christmas card addressed to a girl, now a deceased adult, with a disturbing message related to a crime. Her quest to discover the story behind the card leads her to revelations about a more recent crime. In "Death of a Christmas Carol," Hollis echoes the plot of the 1949 film *A Letter to Three Wives* when Hayley Powell, office manager for the Bar Harbor *Island Times*, and her two best friends receive a collective Christmas card telling them that one of their husbands has run away with a local temptress. "Death of a Christmas Card Crafter" finds Ehrhart's Pamela Paterson, founder and mainstay of the Arborville, N.J., Knit and Nibble knitting club, investigating the death of a much-loved art teacher and Christmas card designer. All feature appealing characters and straightforward plots. Cozy readers seeking undemanding escape from real-life holiday hoopla will be satisfied. *Agents: (for Meier) Meg Ruley and Christina Hogrebe, Jane Rotrosen Agency; (for Ehrhart) Evan Marshall, Evan Marshall Agency. (Nov.)*

The Cipher

Isabella Maldonado. Thomas & Mercer, $15.95 trade paper (378p) ISBN 978-1-5420-2247-7

When 27-year-old FBI special agent Nina Guerrera, the heroine of this riveting series launch from Maldonado (the Detective Cruz series), is attacked by a high school student while jogging in a Springfield, Va., park, she fights off the boy and arrests him. A video of the assault goes viral, and is watched by the man from whom the 16-year-old Nina, then in foster care, escaped after he abducted and raped her. Soon afterward, a 16-year-old girl is murdered in Washington, D.C., and the killer leaves a note that FBI officials believe refers to Nina. Calling himself the Cipher, the killer goes on a cross-country murder spree, leaving cryptic notes at each crime scene. The Cipher garners attention through social media, especially after he streams the video of him raping Nina 11 years earlier. The frequent plot twists will keep readers guessing to the end, and Maldonado draws on her 22 years in the FBI to add realism. Determined to overcome her painful past, the admirable Nina has enough depth to sustain a long-running series. *Agent: Liza Fleissig, Liza Royce Agency. (Nov.)*

Mimi Lee Reads Between the Lines

Jennifer J. Chow. Berkley Prime Crime, $16 trade paper (320p) ISBN 978-1-9848-0501-0

Chow's sprightly sequel to *Mimi Lee Gets a Clue* involves Mimi Lee, who owns an L.A. pet grooming salon, and Marshmallow, Mimi's telepathic cat, who can communicate with people and other animals, in an investigation at Mimi's sister Alice's school, where one of Alice's fellow teachers, Helen Reed, turns up dead in her car. Though there's no sign of foul play, the lack of an obvious cause of death leads both the police and Mimi to look into whether Helen was murdered. Mimi gets more feline help after she rescues a kitten from under Helen's car. The kitten, whom she names Nimbus, has an unusual chip under her skin, and Marshmallow reveals that he and Nimbus were kept by the same man, who'd implanted a device in each cat to enhance their "mental capabilities." Nimbus is able to share the fact that a man, possibly her former master, was at the school on the day of Helen's death. Mimi's appealing narrative voice keeps the action moving, despite a distracting subplot involving strains in her parents' marriage. This is catnip for fans of talking cat cozies. *Agent: Jessica Faust, BookEnds Literary. (Nov.)*

The Spiderling

Marcia Preston. RoadRunner, $24 (272p) ISBN 978-1-937054-58-8

The opening of Preston's engrossing latest (after *The Wind Comes Sweeping*) offers a whiff of mystery as Libby Seager hurls a gun over the side of a cliff into the ocean after driving to the coast from San Jose, Calif. Libby gets into the Mustang she stole earlier that day, and she and Kiwi, her 11-year-old daughter, head south, their only desire to get away from San Jose as fast as possible. They eventually end up at the Sleepy Iguana, a bar in the dusty little town of Sand Flats, where they're immediately taken under the wing of a fellow patron who senses Libby's fragility. Kiwi enrolls herself at the local elementary school, while Libby takes a job waitressing at the Sleepy Iguana. Passages touching on the death of Kiwi's father in Iraq and her mother's steady disintegration as a parent prepare the way for the events that fateful night in San Jose that prompted Libby to flee. Readers looking for an affecting tale of overcoming—or at least coming to terms with—personal tragedy will be more than satisfied. *(Nov.)*

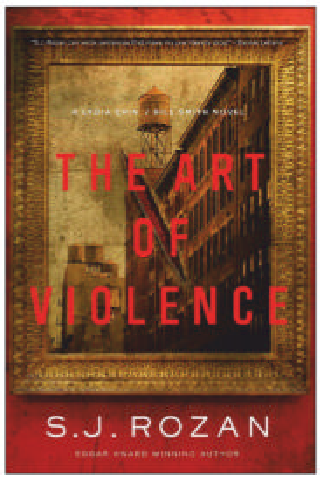
Without Regret

David Hunt and R.J. Pineiro. Kindle Direct, $9.99 e-book (326p) ASIN B088BBTZ66

In Hunt and Pineiro's rip-roaring third thriller featuring Col. Hunter Stark (after 2018's *Without Fear*), technical problems cause the plane carrying Kim Jong-un, North Korea's president, and his entourage to Washington, D.C., to land at Dallas–Fort Worth International Airport, where they run into ex-president George W. Bush, who loans the North Koreans his plane. That plane is shot down seconds after takeoff, killing everyone aboard. The shooters, Sinaloa cartel member Mireya Moreno Carreon, who has a grudge against Bush, and her henchmen, weren't aware of the switch. Not on the plane was formidable Naree Kyong-Lee, the North Korean in charge of Kim's security, who vows revenge. Several subplots, one featuring Stark's former partner, FBI agent Monica Cruz, entertain, but it's Stark's efforts to prevent WWIII that will keep readers turning the pages. The superior action scenes more than compensate for some uneven writing ("Her eyes glinted with visible disdain on a ghostly and narrow face") and hokey dialogue. Hunt and Pineiro reinforce their place in the military thriller genre. *(Self-published)*

★ The Art of Violence

S.J. Rozan. Pegasus Crime, $25.95 (352p) ISBN 978-1-64313-531-1



Edgar winner Rozan brilliantly inverts a whodunit trope in her outstanding 13th mystery featuring New York City PIs Lydia Chin and Bill Smith (after 2019's *Paper Son*): instead of seeking exoneration, a convicted killer seeks to be proven guilty. Six years earlier, Bill was on Sam Tabor's defense team after Sam was charged with murdering Amy Evans, whom he'd stabbed to death at a party after drinking some punch laced with PCP. Sam, who had no previous history of violence, rejected an insanity defense, and accepted a plea deal. But Sam's 15-to-life sentence was curtailed after a successful campaign for his release spearheaded by activists who believed that his artistic gifts, discovered during his imprisonment, merited clemency. Now, after two women who resemble Evans are fatally stabbed in the city, Sam feels that he's once again responsible, and beseeches Bill to prove his guilt. Bill isn't sure what to believe, and aided by Lydia navigates a twisted path to the truth. As always, Rozan's intelligent, witty prose is a treat, and she justifies a choice made in the previous book regarding the relationship between her two leads. Newcomers as well as devotees will be enthralled. *Agent: Josh Getzler, Hannigan Getzler Literary. (Dec.)*

SF/Fantasy/Horror

★ Knight's Ransom

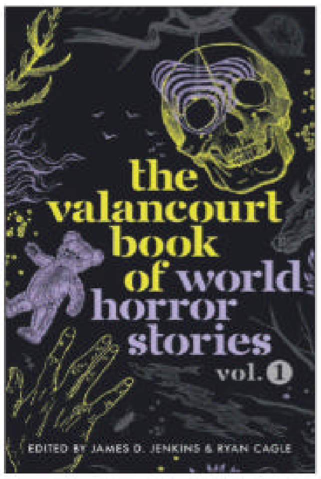
Jeff Wheeler. 47North, $14.95 trade paper (428p) ISBN 978-1-5420-2529-4

With this superlative epic fantasy, Wheeler (the King's Fountain series) launches his First Argentine series, which returns to the Kingdom of Cedigion to chronicle the turbulent events surrounding the first rulers of the Argentine dynasty. Wheeler twists medieval history and the Arthurian legends that inspire him into new configurations, and many elements of those stirring old tales echo through this swashbuckling coming-of-age story. Episodes from appealing hero Ransom Barton's early life alternate with brief entries from the journals of Claire de Murrow, who grew up with Ransom in the court of King Gervase, where both were held as hostages to guarantee their parents' loyalty to the crown. Through many painful trials both physical and emotional, Ransom wins his knighthood and loses his heart to Claire. Throughout, Ransom is stirred by strange bursts of strength and skill that suggest he's one of the "fountain-blessed," but while he fights ferociously in his duty to successive lords, his recklessness proves a liability that he must learn to overcome. Wheeler does an expert job of reintroducing his fantasy world through the eyes of sympathetic characters that fans and new readers alike will root for. This is sure to be a hit. *(Jan.)*

★ The Valancourt Book of World Horror Stories, Vol. 1

Edited by James D. Jenkins and Ryan Cagle. Valancourt, $19.99 trade paper (428p) ISBN 978-1-948405-64-5

This groundbreaking anthology of contemporary horror stories from around the world is an irrefutable testament to the international popularity of horror fiction as a form of literary expression. These 21 tales, most appearing in English for the first time, range in approach from the classic gothic (Spanish author Pilar Pedraza's "Mater Tenebrarum") to psychological horror (Hungarian Attila Veres's "The Time Remaining"), physical horror (Finn Marko Hautala's "Pale Toes"), quirky surrealism (Ecuadorian Solange Rodríguez Pappe's "Tiny Women"), and dark absurdist satire (Dane Lars Ahm's "Donation"). Peruvian author Tanya Tynjälä riffs on Greek myth in "The Collector" while Bathie Ngoye Thiam pulls from Senegalese folklore in "The House of Leuk Dawour" and Yvette Tan employs elements of Filipino legend in "All the Birds." Among the book's outstanding selections are Swedish author Anders Fager's "Backstairs," in which a psychotherapist horribly misinterprets the terrifying reality underlying a patient's dreams, and "Down, in Their World" by Romanian Flavius Ardelean, which translates the folk legends of Transylvania into a tale of subterranean nightmares. Jenkins and Cagle cast their net wide to cull stories that would distinguish any compilation in which they appeared. This book is a must for horror fans and the start of an exciting new series. *(Dec.)*


the valancourt book of world horror stories
vol. 1
EDITED BY JAMES D. JENKINS & RYAN CAGLE

Dawn of Vengeance

Ronie Kendig. Enclave, $24.99 (416p) ISBN 978-1-62184-145-6

Kendig weaves suspenseful intergalactic intrigue in the entertaining second space opera in the Droseran Saga series (after *The Brand of Light*). Bounty hunter Marco Dusan returns to his home planet of Drosero to be crowned as the ruler of Kalonica. When tension arises between him and his brother, Prince Darius, who is now married to Marco's ex-lover, Marco retreats from court to tour the outskirts of his realm. But in the course of his travels, he's abducted by the Irukandji, a Droserian tribe colluding with the planet-invading Symmachians. Meanwhile on Symmachia, LCpl. Eija Zacdari trains for the hyperjump program, a military operation to open up a space gate, but her instincts tell her that something's amiss. After uncovering the program's ulterior motives, Eija forms an unlikely alliance with Marco to save humanity from alien annihilation. Kendig smoothly interlaces Marco's and

TIM WESTOVER
THE WINTER SISTERS
A NOVEL

Folklore, medicine, and superstition in the Georgia mountains

"Southern literature at its most moving and vivid and beautiful."
Southern Literary Review

"Historical fiction fans will be riveted by this immersive portrait of medicine and superstition in 19th-century rural Georgia."
Publishers Weekly BookLife
Editor's Choice

"Solid writing and strong characters buoy this examination of a captivating moment in American history when old beliefs encountered the new."
Kirkus Reviews

"With its unique twists on history and deftly crafted characters, *The Winter Sisters* will prove to be an immediate and enduringly popular addition."
Midwest Book Review

★WINNER★
THE Selfies BOOK AWARDS U.S.
PUBLISHERS WEEKLY & BOOKLIFE

TIM WESTOVER
THE WINTER SISTERS
A NOVEL
QW

ISBN: 978-0-9849748-5-6 (hardback)
978-0-9849748-9-4 (paperback)

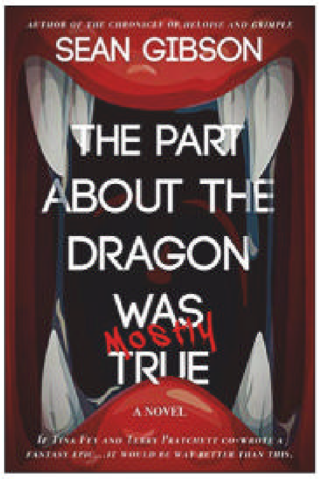
timwestover.com

Eija's narratives as they each grapple with treacheries on their planets, and though the plot is slow to develop, ample chase scenes and sword fights create tension along the way. Series readers will be pleased. *Agent: Steve Laube, the Steve Laube Agency. (Dec.)*

★ The Part about the Dragon Was (Mostly) True

Sean Gibson. Parliament House, $6.99 e-book (332p) ISBN 978-1-73338-689-0

Evoking the dry humor of Terry Pratchett and absurdist trope subversions of Monty Python, Gibson (*The Chronicle of Heloise and Grimple*) flips the classic fantasy setup of a ragtag band of heroes on a quest to slay a fearsome dragon. Half-elven Heloise is the most talented and beautiful bard in Erithea—at least according to her. Sworn to secrecy until now, Heloise is finally at liberty to disclose the true story of Dragonia, a great dragon that once terrorized the hamlet of Skendrick, revealing all the ways the bardic legends have mythologized and distorted the facts. In Heloise's account, the townsfolk of Skendrick are all as long-winded as they are dim-witted and entirely deserve being eaten by the dragon. The scrappy heroes who come to save them are also not much to write home about: there's pint-sized grifter Rumscrabble, a half-halfling/half-dwarf; Whiska, a quick-tempered wizard; Nadinta, a cash-strapped elf; and Borg, a slow-moving rock giant. Only Heloise herself saves the team from total incompetency. Alternating between the idealized version of events and "how it actually went down," Gibson's story is clever, twisty, and bursting with side-splittingly funny one-liners. Fantasy fans are guaranteed a laugh. *(Dec.)*



The Dark Walk Forward

John S. McFarland. Dark Owl, $12.99 trade paper (170p) ISBN 978-1-951716-14-1

Monstrosity is in the eye of the beholder in this unsettling debut collection from McFarland (*The Black Garden*). Many of these 19 stories take place in the rural Mississippi River town of Ste. Odile in 1922, as the residents grapple with their inner demons. One of the town's doctors gives in to the urge to self-mutilate in "Demiurge," while another wrestles with his self-serving nature in "Placide." "The Little Dead Thing" focuses on a scarred ex-soldier whose ostracism from Ste. Odile society leaves him at the mercy of a parasite, while "Porphyria" introduces a miner who contracts a disease that leads him to be accused of vampirism. McFarland roots many of his tales in real historical horrors, exploring the plight of WWI veterans in the title story and cancer-stricken factory workers in "The Radium Girls." Wandering farther afield, "Saturn Devouring His Son" tells of artist Francisco Goya tripping over his child's forgotten toys, and "Hakudo Maru" sees a Japanese fisherman atoning for his son's neglected funeral rites. McFarland tempers his frights with the mercy of familial love and sympathy for outsiders and victims. Horror readers will be riveted. *(Dec.)*

★ The Fires of Vengeance

Evan Winter. Orbit, $28 (544p) ISBN 978-0-316-48980-5

Winter returns with a second action-packed installment to the Burning series (following *The Rage of Dragons*). Tau Tafari—now Solarin—is not the same person he was at the start of the series after losing loved ones in and out of battle, confronting entitled Nobles who wish to see him fail, dealing with a surprise attack on the capital, and becoming Queen Esi's Champion. What hasn't changed? Tau's palpable rage at the classist system that oppressed his family and his ever-present desire to avenge the deaths of those he cared about. As Queen Esi's sister, Tsiora, and her army move to reclaim Palm City, Tau and his blood brothers seek advantages against those who write off their caste as Lessers. All the while, Tau navigates an increasingly complicated relationship with the queen. With energizing battle scenes and well-handled romance, Winters capably earns readers' attention again as he unfurls the politics of a nation in-flux. This forceful second epic will delight fans and newcomers alike—and leave readers holding their breath for the next in the series. *Agent: Erin Malone, WME. (Nov.)*

Daughter of the Serpentine

E.E. Knight. Ace, $17 trade paper (496p) ISBN 978-1-984804-08-2

Picking up from 2019's *Novice Dragoneer*, the epic second installment to Knight's Dragoneer Academy series sees dauntless heroine Ileth, now 16, facing down a slew of obstacles as she unflaggingly pursues her dreams, despite her underprivileged upbringing, lack of resources, and persistent stutter. After many months of grueling work and misadventures, Ileth has earned her spot as Apprentice to the Dragoneers of the Serpentine, bringing her one step closer to her goal of riding a majestic dragon in service to the Republic she calls home. But she has much left to learn, and her school masters are determined to push her to her limits. Along the way, Ileth once again stumbles into intrigue, participating in the Serpentine's campaign against the pirates who have gripped the region in a stranglehold, and becoming a pawn in a delicate political game when the powerful Governor Raal claims her as his daughter. Through these myriad adventures, Ileth, with her innate honesty, unyielding determination, and kind heart, proves a catalyst for change in the Republic. Her leisurely paced coming-of-age will put readers in mind of the classic YA fantasies of Tamora Pierce and Mercedes Lackey. This is sure to delight fantasy readers young and old. *Agent: John Silbersack, the Bent Agency. (Nov.)*

Blood of the Sun

Dan Rabarts and Lee Murray. Raw Dog Screaming, $15.95 trade paper (236p) ISBN 978-1-947879-26-3

The suspenseful third supernatural thriller in Rabarts and Murray's Path of Ra series (after *Teeth of the Wolf*) sees Penny Yee, a scientific consultant to the Auckland, New Zealand, police, and her ne'er-do-well brother, Matiu, face off against gang violence, cults, and a mystical family reunion. After a massacre on Freyberg wharf, the police call in Penny to help piece together evidence from a slew of hacked-up bodies. Meanwhile, Matiu can sense that the Māori gods are growing restless, urging him to realize his inheritance as a demigod. But between meeting with his parole officer and becoming embroiled in a sun-worshipping cult, Matiu has too many mortal worries to join his long-lost family in their supernatural battle. The threads of the siblings' disparate plots weave together much more tightly than it first appears. Rabarts and Murray write with characteristic verve, injecting the noir atmosphere with dark humor. Series readers will find much to enjoy. *(Nov.)*

The Shattered Realm of Ardor Benn

Tyler Whitesides. Orbit, $17.99 trade paper (736p) ISBN 978-0-316520-28-7

Gifted conman Ardor Benn returns in the excellent second epic in Whitesides's Kingdom of Grit fantasy trilogy (after *The Thousand Deaths of Ardor Benn*). Whitesides reacquaints readers with Ard mid-caper: he's enclosed in a coffin impersonating a general's corpse in order to steal a valuable medal from a mausoleum. While fleeing the scene, he stumbles on an even bigger potential payday when Queen Abeth Ostel Agaul mistakes him for a police inspector and tasks him with a sensitive investigation. Abeth believes that her late son, Shad, a rightful heir to the throne presumed dead in an explosion, may be alive. She also suspects that her cousin, King Termain, the current ruler of the Greater Chain, had a hand in Shad's disappearance. Termain's reign is viewed as illegitimate by many in his kingdom—and Ard helped facilitate his rise to power. Now Ard assures Abeth that he'll uncover the truth of what happened to her son—but to do so he'll have to gain the trust of an organized crime ring. Whitesides makes his vibrant world easily accessible for newcomers, and the enjoyable blend of intrigue, lighthearted escapades, and thrilling action brilliantly sets the stage for the series' conclusion. Readers will be thrilled. *Agent: Ammi-Joan Paquette, Erin Murphy Literary. (Nov.)*

The Dwarf of Westerbourg

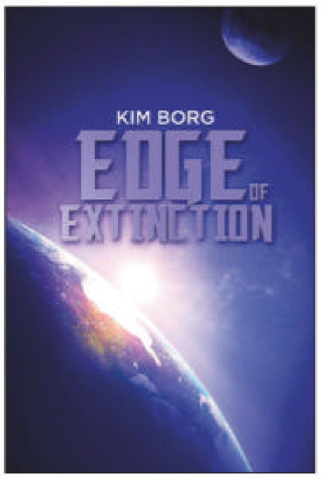
Christian Heinrich Spiess. Snuggly, $19.95 trade paper (298p) ISBN 978-1-64525-049-4

This overlooked gothic gem from Spiess (1755–1799), set in the mid–13th century and alternating between prose and dramatic formats, depicts the dangers of unchecked passion. Little Peter, a spirit of unknown origin and skill, is bound to the German Knight Rodolphe of Westerbourg by supernatural forces and accompanies him on his far-flung travels as counselor, servant, and frequent savior. Wandering from Germany across Europe and into the Middle East, Rodolphe falls in love with a string of women and has a series of affairs that universally end in tragedy: Regina, Agnes, Euphrosina, and the nun Mary all die; Clara is locked in a tower where Rodolphe will never see her again. When Little Peter is no longer able to help Rodolphe enact his increasingly desperate desires, Rodolphe turns to a much darker spirit for aid. It's easy to see how Rodolphe's page-turning adventures, first published in 1791, influenced the works that came after it, notably Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*. This is a valuable reprint for any reader with an interest in the history of gothicism. *(Nov.)*

Edge of Extinction

Kim Borg. WiDo, $16.95 trade paper (272p) ISBN 978-1-947966-37-6

A scientific survey to determine whether a distant planet is suitable for colonization turns up unexpected results in Borg's riveting debut. In the 2080s, Earth is rapidly becoming inhospitable for the overcrowded human population. Lifelong friends Amber Lytton, a behavioral ecologist, and Joel Carter, a paleozoologist, are tapped to join the second mission to survey Arcadia, a recently discovered planet with startling similarities to Earth. Borg interweaves scientific exposition with electric action scenes and satisfying plot twists as the team explores the planet and discovers what happened to the first team of scientists sent to Arcadia. Hair-raising encounters with dinosaurlike alien life forms and news from Earth that there's a spy on the crew will have readers on tenterhooks. Borg crafts convincing characters and social conflict and offers a thoughtful examination of the mental frameworks by which humans shape assumptions when the team is confronted by evidence that they are not the only intelligent life on Arcadia. Exciting action, lively pacing, and a razor-sharp look at human fallibility make for a winning adventure. *(Self-published)*



Romance/Erotica

This Time Next Year

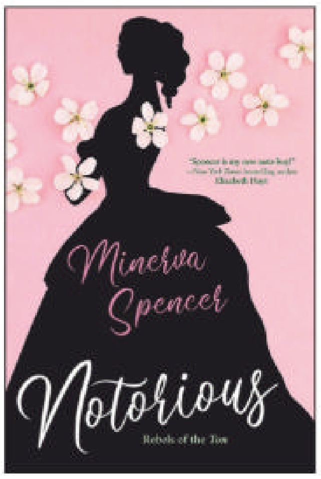
Sophie Cousens. Putnam, $16 trade paper (304p) ISBN 978-0-593-19120-0

Destiny has a hand in Cousens's touching debut. Minnie Cooper and Quinn Hamilton were born in the same hospital on January 1, 1990, but while Quinn, whose family bagged the cash prize for having the first baby born in the '90s, has always loved his birthday, Minnie's New Year's celebrations have always gone horribly and she believes the holiday is jinxed. New Year's Eve 2019 is no different: she's dragged to her boyfriend's work friend's party, someone vomits on her shirt, and she manages to lock herself in the washroom while trying to clean it up. She isn't rescued until the next morning—by Quinn. The days after go from bad to worse for Minnie as her catering business approaches the brink of ruin and her landlord evicts her from her apartment. Surprisingly, Quinn swoops in to save the day again, proving himself unworthy of the hatred Minnie's carried for him all these years for claiming the money her family desperately needed. Flashbacks to New Year's past and subplots about both Quinn and Minnie's families add depth, while hilarious secondary characters inject levity in just the right places. The romance is slow to sizzle, but Cousens's debut is ripe with both emotional vulnerability and zaniness. *(Dec.)*

Notorious

Minerva Spencer. Kensington, $15.95 trade paper (352p) ISBN 978-1-4967-3283-5

The tangled Victorian romance that launches the Rebels of the Ton series from Spencer (the Academy of Love series) kicks off when the very wealthy Drusilla Clare is discovered in what appears to be a



compromising position with her conversational sparring partner and secret crush, Gabriel Marlington. The two must marry to save their reputations, but guarded Drusilla, a "follower of Mary Wollstonecraft," finds no joy in the prospect of marriage—and worries about what being married to man she loves unrequitedly will do to her psyche. Algerian-born Gabe has been the subject of gossip since his arrival in London and doesn't want his good name smeared. He doesn't understand why his new wife has always treated him with such vitriol, but he's determined to try to have a happy, monogamous marriage. The more Gabe seduces Drusilla with his intellect and patience, the more she lowers her guard and lets him see her true feelings—but Gabe's made some powerful enemies by ruffling feathers among London's upper crust, and the budding romance may not survive the threats on their lives. Though Drusilla's defensive hostility toward Gabe grows tedious, both characters are strong, complex, and believable, and the cliffhanger offers a nice setup for the sequel. Readers who like thrills mixed in with their romance should check this out. *Agent: Jessica Alvarez, BookEnds Literary. (Dec.)*

When the Wind Chimes

Mary Ting. Rosewind, $14.95 trade paper (260p) ISBN 978-1-64548-047-1

Flat secondary characters bog down this sentimental romance from Ting (*Genes*). Kate Summers flies to the Hawaiian island of Kauai to spend Christmas with her sister, Abby, and nephew, Tyler, and help them through their first major holiday without Abby's recently deceased husband. As Kate struggles to help them financially, find artistic fulfillment in her career as a graphic designer, and get over her cheating ex, a series of run-ins with the mysterious Leonardo Medici, a 28-year-old billionaire real estate mogul, alter the course of her vacation. They first meet when he pays for her cab ride from the airport. Later, he turns up at her sister's gallery, coincidentally runs a charity event at her nephew's day care, and finally hires Kate as a temporary nanny for his niece. In a supernatural twist, each of their meetings are presaged by the sound of wind chimes, which Leonardo's niece claims is evidence of a visiting angel. Ting's child characters suffer from being too cutesy and precocious to be believed, while Abby and the other islanders' obsession with Kate and Leonardo's relationship grows ridiculous. Leonardo himself is one-dimensional and the Hawaiian setting is disappointingly underdeveloped. Though this has the trappings of a frothy tropical escape, readers will long for more substance. *Agent: Italia Gandolfo, Gandolfo Helin & Fountain Literary Management. (Nov.)*

Shades of Darkness

Alexandra Ivy. Kensington, $7.99 e-book (256p) ISBN 978-1-5161-1094-0

Ivy's multilayered and action-packed 16th Guardians of Eternity paranormal romance (after *Conquer the Darkness*) follows rowdy, badass ghost Chaaya, who's been dead for centuries and causes trouble wherever she goes, despite the best efforts of her begrudging bodyguard, Basq, a vampire. When evil wolf-shifter Brigette, one of Chaaya's old enemies, escapes from her dungeon, Queen Inga of the Mer-folk calls in Chaaya to catch her. Brigette threatens to unleash an evil that would destroy the world—and it's up to Chaaya and Basq to stop her. So when Brigette kidnaps one of the Queen's closest confidants and jumps through a portal, Chaaya and Basq chase after her into another world. Their quest leads them through multiple dimensions, and along the way their feelings for each other grow from animosity to love. Ripe with humor, romance, and the thrill of the chase, this exciting installment will please returning readers and welcome new ones. *Agent: Evan Marshall, the Marshall Agency. (Nov.)*

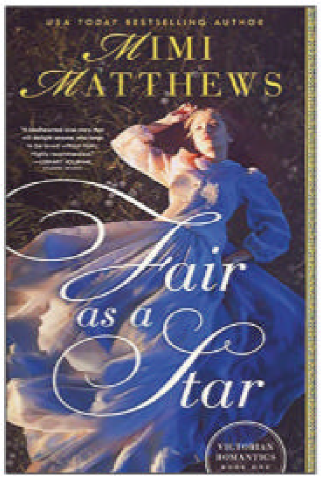
Ride the Tide

Julie Ann Walker. Sourcebooks Casablanca, $7.99 mass market (416p) ISBN 978-1-4926-0896-7

The addictive third romance in Walker's Deep Six series (after *Devil and the Deep*) delivers a high-octane blend of suspense and sexual tension. Former SEAL Mason McCarthy's ex-wife convinced him that he is "not normal" due to his years in the military. Now Mason keeps to himself save for his partnership with his former brothers-in-arms at Deep Six Salvage and the occasional no-strings-attached romp. Alexandra Merriweather, a 27-year-old historian working with Deep Six to find a long-lost treasure, has it bad for Mason. But Alex is a virgin, and Mason doesn't believe her repeated assurances that she's not looking for commitment. Their will-they-won't-they dynamic comes to a head when an enemy from Mason's deployment in the Middle East tracks Mason down to avenge his family by killing Mason and everyone he cares about. Though the cartoonish characterization of the Iranian villain is disappointing, the chemistry between Mason and Alex is palpable and the plotting is taut. Snappy prose and hair-raising danger keep the pages of this steamy suspense novel flying. *Agent: Nicole Resciniti, the Seymour Agency. (Nov.)*

★ Fair as a Star

Mimi Matthews. Perfectly Proper, $3.99 e-book (225p) ISBN 978-1-7330569-8-4



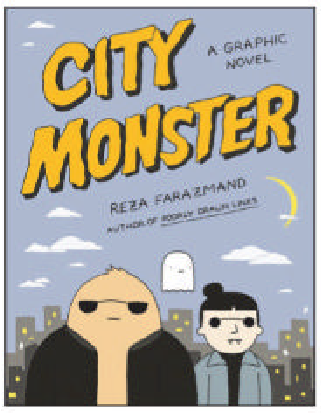
Matthews (*The Lost Letter*) spins a moving friends-to-lovers Victorian romance that stands out for its sensitive portrayal of a heroine living with depression at a time when the condition was misunderstood and maligned. Beryl Burnham returns to Somerset, England, after an abrupt, year-long trip abroad that sent rumors flying through her quaint little village. Though her marriage to Sir Henry Rivenhall looms, Beryl is less eager to reconnect with her betrothed than she is to reunite with Henry's younger brother, Mark, who had been her faithful correspondent while she was away. Unaware of Mark's unspoken love for her, Beryl confides in him about the sadness that has been with her since childhood and reveals the reason for her sudden trip: she overdosed on sleeping medication and was sent away on doctor's orders. While compassionate Mark offers support and works to understand Beryl's condition, callous Henry reveals his true colors, causing a rift between the couple. Beryl's strength and kindness shine even at her darkest moments, and Mathews does an admirable job of showing that, while Mark's love cannot cure her, it can help her become more courageous and self-aware. A humorous subplot involving Beryl's headstrong sister, Winifred, balances out the heavier moments with levity. Historical romance fans won't want to miss this. *(Self-published)*

Comics

City Monster

Reza Farazmand. Plume, $18 trade paper (112p) ISBN 978-0-593-08779-4

Farazmand, creator of the webcomic *Poorly Drawn Lines*, spins mumblecore from the misadventures of a cast of supernatural slackers. A Bigfoot-like monster moves from the forest to the city, acquires a pair of sunglasses, and settles into a life of playing video games and smoking pot with the ghost who haunts his apartment. The narrative develops a wisp of a plot as the monster and his vampire neighbor, Kim, team up to uncover the ghost's past, a mystery that leads them to a museum, a séance, and a supernatural detective. But Farazmand isn't very concerned with story arc; readers simply tag along as the characters go about their chill routines. The urban setting's populated with creepy creatures who provide drily funny gags, including a pierced minotaur (rings in both septum and horn) who works at a coffee shop and perching demon birds who call-out discouraging comments: "You'll never do any cool personal projects! Caw!" The simple, blocky artwork and muted colors, if simplistic, complement the deadpan vibe. Fans of Simon Hanselmann's *Megahex* or Lisa Hanawalt's *Tuca & Bertie* animated series will dig dropping in on these laid-back millennial monsters. *Agent: Charlie Olsen, InkWell Management. (Nov.)*



The Prophet

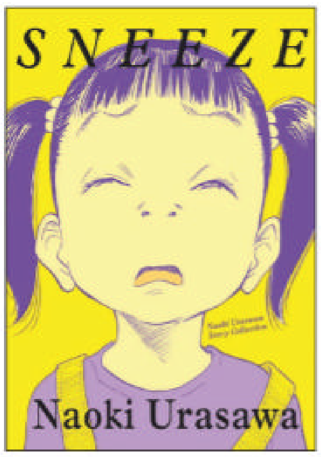
Khalil Gibran and Pete Katz. Canterbury Classics, $19.99 (128p) ISBN 978-1-64517-242-0

This thoughtful adaptation of Gibran's classic treatise on love, empathy, and religious harmony reads like illustrated scripture, but with updated plot. Katz (*The Art of War: The Graphic Novel*) introduces a narrative frame to the classic text: a woman named Al reads Gibran's work to her father while he lies comatose in a hospital. Realizing a connection between her own name and the seeress Altimira, Al begins to ask herself philosophical and personal questions, coming to a point of transformation. As a professional painter, her struggle to come to terms with her father's illness has affected her ability to produce art—her father comes to her in a dream to tell her to "stop using him as an excuse to avoid life." As her friends rally around her, Al draws inspiration from them, as well as the teachings of Gibran. Readers will likewise find inspiration in Katz's detailed and colorful ink and watercolor canvases, which venerate both Gibran and the new scenes with bold realistic art and glowing colors, whether they weave in heavy religious symbolism or simply show Al's buddies in conversation. Some stretches of challenging prose demand a degree of patience from readers atypical for comics, but the reward for close attention to Katz's adaptation is worth it. *(Oct.)*

Sneeze

Naoki Urasawa, trans. from the Japanese by John Werry. Viz, $17.99 (200p) ISBN 978-1-974717-48-4

Eisner-winner Urasawa (*20th Century Boys*) brings together a diverse array of short fictional and autobiographical manga in this provocative collection, which originally appeared in Japanese magazines and anthologies. Per Urasawa's signature style, much of the fiction grapples with monsters and the supernatural; the opening strip "DAMIYAN!" stars a yakuza underboss using a psychic teen's powers to execute a hit, while "Kaiju Kingdom" explores a Japan that has made Godzilla-style attacks into a national tourism industry (a nuanced allegory for how the West fetishizes Asian cultures). Likewise, Urasawa's nonfiction centers on his love for folk rock idols, among them Paul McCartney, Bob Dylan, and Japanese singer Kenji Endo. These stories, while engaging and with no dearth of technical skill, also highlight Urasawa's paternalism, particularly "It's a Beautiful Day" and the lecherous (if unintentionally) "Musica Nostra," which calls to attention his underdeveloped female characters. Still, Urasawa's emotive art and clever humor remain unparalleled within the genre; plus, there's lots to chew over in his commentary in the backmatter. Urasawa's fans will consider this a must-read. *(Oct.)*



Sazan & Comet Girl

Yuriko Akase, trans. from the Japanese by Adrienne Beck. Seven Seas, $24.99 trade paper (512p) ISBN 978-1-64505-299-9

Akase's debut, a space opera, is as colorful and exhilarating as her effervescent heroine, Comet Girl. Sazan, a young construction worker from Earth, leads an ordinary life, until he misses the "last earth-bound rocket" returning from a job and gets picked up from the transfer station by Mina, a red-headed girl on a space scooter willing to give him a ride home. But trouble follows: space pirates attack them, and Sazan is shocked to discover that who he thought was a "normal girl" is in fact the infamous Comet Girl—a being storing immense energy inside her body. Unable to fully control her abilities and constantly hunted by those desperate to steal her powers, Mina is also known as the "Harbinger of Disaster." The work bursts with offhand humor ("What, she peed outta her eyes?") and a cast of eccentric characters, and the quirky retro art style pulls inspiration from classics such as Astro Boy and Dragon Ball Z. This fast-paced, rowdy omnibus delivers a fun-filled space adventure, accessible for manga newbies. *(Sept.)*

Nonfiction

Uncommon Grit *features photos, including the one shown here, of Navy SEAL recruits performing endurance-test exercises during training, which culminates in "Hell Week" (reviewed on p. 82).*

★ Women, Men, and the Whole Damn Thing: Feminism, Misogyny, and Where We Go from Here

David Leser. Pegasus, $27.95 (336p)
ISBN 978-1-64313-628-8

Journalist Leser (*To Begin to Know*) surveys "universal crimes against women" in this searing, deeply reported account. "It's here, there, and everywhere," Leser writes about sexual harassment, "coded into the system and architecture of where we work and how we live." He credits the #MeToo movement for allowing women "to describe the not-so-alternative reality they have always inhabited," and documents abuse and rape allegations against Harvey Weinstein, Louis C. K., Irish rugby players Paddy Jackson and Stuart Olding, and other prominent men in the U.S., Europe, and Australia. Leser also points out misogyny in Jewish prayers, the New Testament, and the works of Aristotle, and cites shocking statistics about discrimination, harassment, and sexual violence ("In America, a woman is raped every 9 seconds and a rape is reported every 6.2 seconds"). He interviews women's rights activists including Zainib Salbi, founder of Women for Women International, and playwright Eve Ensler, talks with his daughter about her first sexual encounters, and casts a critical eye on his own behavior and attitudes. Leser's fluid writing style and emotional honesty will keep readers from sinking into despair, despite the heaviness of the material. This powerful call to heal the "collective wound" of misogyny resonates. *(Jan.)*

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Sonic Boom: The Impossible Rise of Warner Bros. Records from Hendrix to Fleetwood Mac to Madonna to Prince

Peter Ames Carlin. Holt, $29.99 (288p)
ISBN 978-1-2503-0156-7

Music journalist Carlin (*Bruce*) relays in his characteristic colorful style how music mogul Mo Ostin built Warner Bros. Records into an industry leader. In 1960, Frank Sinatra formed Reprise Records, asking his friend Ostin—who had earned Sinatra's respect at jazz outlet Verve Records—to run the label, which Warner bought in 1963, becoming Warner/Reprise Records. Ostin succeeded at Warner, Carlin writes, because he focused on producing strong albums rather than "surefire" singles: "Something good was always going to happen because you'd just made a great record." Between 1967 and 1970, the label signed 90 new acts—among them Joni Mitchell, Van Morrison, Fleetwood Mac, and Alice Cooper—most of which eventually, through marketing and artist development, found commercial success. Through the '80s and early '90s, Ostin brought in an eclectic array of artists, including soul singer Chaka Khan and blues guitarist Bonnie Raitt—and notably, Prince and Madonna. Those looking for a gossipy tell-all won't find one here; Ostin stuck with a formula, trusted and invested in his artists, took the music seriously, and honored the intelligence and taste of his customers. This brisk portrait of the man who made Warner Bros. into a powerhouse offers essential reading on the business and history of popular music. *(Jan.)*

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★ Djinn

Tofik Dibi, trans. from the Dutch by Nicholas P. Barr. State Univ. of New York, $29.95 (144p)
ISBN 978-1-43848-130-2

In this excellent memoir, 39-year-old former Dutch Green Left politician Dibi tells how he navigated the fraught politics of integration and sexuality as a second-generation Moroccan-Dutch, Muslim, gay man. Dibi intensely describes how he felt caught between "it"—his homosexuality—and "them"—his family, friends, and the wider community who looked up to him as an outspoken advocate for minority rights. And yet, Dibi writes, he never saw himself reflected in Dutch society or popular culture, particularly the hip-hop music and comic books he enjoyed. Because of this, he struggled to fully accept himself—and with the original publication of this book in the Netherlands in 2015 came out as a gay man. Dibi's narrative will captivate readers with its sharp descriptions of how he attempted to rid himself of the "djinn" (spirits that controlled him) through a smoke ceremony in a Moroccan cave, as well as years of dancing around questions about his sexuality in public interviews and at the family dinner table. Dibi shatters stereotypes with this punchy, raw chronicle. *(Jan.)*

* * *

Discovering the Inner Mother: A Guide to Healing the Mother Wound and Claiming Your Personal Power

Bethany Webster. Morrow, $27.99 (256p)
ISBN 978-0-06-288444-2

Webster, facilitator of workshops based on her personal healing method," debuts with a comforting if diffuse explanation of her methods for alleviating "intergenerational trauma" among women. She defines the "Mother Wound" as the effect on women of the "pervasive, patriarchal, capitalist cultures rooted in colonization and destruction of the earth that have come to dominate much of the world," which manifest as "a set of internalized limiting beliefs and patterns." She discusses various ways this plays out—silencing women's voices, placing women in reductive roles—and provides prompts for how the reader may respond. To do so, Webster uses composite examples of her workshop students that illustrate her teachings, followed by discussion questions. For instance, Webster tells the story of a woman whose mother raised her as a "surrogate spouse" and "family mediator," distorting her sense of independence as an adult. Webster then uses this case study to spur readers to question how "principles of patriarchy" have affected their own life. Unfortunately, there isn't much in the way of guidance here, and Webster mentions—but never shares—her "seven-step process" to "support other women in healing the Mother Wound," which gives the book at times the feel of being a marketing extension of her workshops. Women who grapple with self-limiting beliefs may glean some insights from the examples given, but the dearth of concrete advice is a disappointment. *(Jan.)*

Black Futures

Edited by Kimberly Drew and Jenna Wortham. Random House, $40 (544p) ISBN 978-0-399-18113-9

Curator Drew and *New York Times Magazine* writer Wortham probe the meaning of Black identity and offer a "series of guideposts" to the future of the Black experience in this multifaceted and visually arresting anthology of essays, poems, and art. Political activist De'Ara Balenger energetically details the fight against voter suppression and the rise of current Black progressives including Georgia gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams, while photographer LaToya Ruby Frazier combines text and image in her devastating portrait of the ongoing water crisis in Flint, Mich. Other pieces highlight LGBTQ and Afro-Indigenous subcultures in the Black community, explore how agricultural knowledge passed down by enslaved Africans has provided sustenance and empowerment to Black Americans, incisively analyze the White House portraits of Barack and Michelle Obama, showcase Black avatars from the video game *The Sims*, and ask, "what does it mean to teach history if Whiteness is not centralized in the classroom?" Bold graphics, vibrant artwork in a plethora of styles and media, and contributions from activists, scholars, and journalists across a wide range of experiences and perspectives showcase the multidimensionality of Black voices in America. This unique and imaginative work issues a powerful call for justice, equality, and inclusion. *Agent: Daniel Greenberg, Levine Greenberg Rostan Literary. (Nov.)*

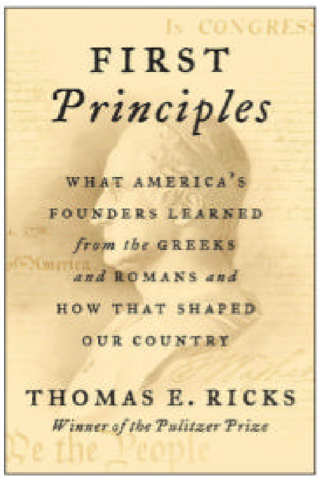
HRH: So Many Thoughts on Royal Style

Elizabeth Holmes. Celadon, $35 (336p) ISBN 978-1-250-62508-3

Fashion journalist Holmes debuts with a flattering and thoroughly enjoyable assessment of style choices made by Queen Elizabeth II, Diana Spencer, Kate Middleton, and Meghan Markle. In Holmes's view, Elizabeth, typically seen as the fustiest of the bunch, is a "strategic genius" for her decision to dress head-to-toe in a single, sensational hue. Princess Diana's clothing choices changed drastically during her 16 years in the spotlight, Holmes notes, from "demure and romantic" to "bold colors and big shapes that seemed to scream: Look at me!" Kate Middleton's commoner status has influenced her style, according to Holmes, who lauds the Duchess of Cambridge's habit of wearing "off-the-rack pieces" that burnish her "every-girl appeal." Meghan Markle's breezy, California-girl style took the requisite conservative turn when she married Prince Harry, though the scrutiny of the British tabloid press never let up, eventually contributing to the couple's decision to distance themselves from the royal family and relocate to America. Holmes makes a strong case, in enthusiastic prose along with lavish photographs of all four women, that her subjects' sartorial choices say as much about their positions in the royal family as they do about their individual identities. Royal watchers will

★ First Principles: What America's Founders Learned from the Greeks and Romans and How That Shaped Our Country

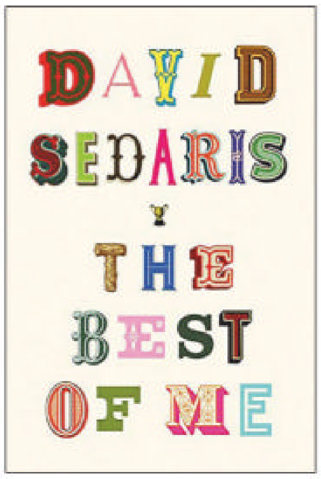
Thomas E. Ricks. Harper, $29.99 (416p) ISBN 978-0-06-299745-6



Pulitzer Prize winner Ricks (*Churchill and Orwell*) delivers an immersive and enlightening look at how the classical educations of the first four U.S. presidents (George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison) influenced their thinking and the shape of American democracy. According to Ricks, the evolution of Washington's military strategy during the Revolutionary War drew from Roman general Fabius's defeat of Hannibal in 203 BCE. Ricks also documents classical antecedents in the construction of the Constitution and Thomas Jefferson's architectural plans for government buildings in Washington, D.C., and analyzes 18th-century opinions on the ancient world expressed in Robert Dodsley's textbook *The Preceptor* ("a blueprint for the Declaration of Independence") and Joseph Addison's play Cato *(which inspired Patrick Henry's famous line "Give me liberty—or give me death")*. The Amphictyonic League, a confederation of early Greek cities, is partly responsible for the U.S. Senate's equalized representation regardless of state size, Ricks points out. The book closes with suggested steps for returning America "to the course intended by the Revolutionary generation," including "don't panic," "re-focus on the public good," and "wake up Congress." With incisive selections from primary sources and astute cultural and political analysis, this lucid and entertaining account is a valuable take on American history. *(Nov.)*

★ The Best of Me: Essays

David Sedaris. Little, Brown, $30 (400p) ISBN 978-0-316-62824-2



Sedaris's brilliant knack for observational humor is on full display in this terrific retrospective essay collection (after *Calypso*). Culled from his previously published volumes and magazine pieces, this work focuses on the dynamics among the six Sedaris siblings and their parents ("I might reinvent myself to strangers, but to this day, as far as my family is concerned, I'm still the one most likely to set your house on fire," he admits). Whether searching for the perfect Paris apartment with his partner, Hugh, recalling long-ago family vacations, or describing his sister Amy's freaky encounter with a psychic, Sedaris finds ample fodder for his keen satiric sense in his life and the lives of those around him. Sedaris can take even the most serious subject—such as his sister Tiffany's suicide—and evoke both empathy and laughter. He can also be just plain hilarious, as in "Jesus Shaves," about a discussion of cultural differences using the limited vocabulary available to students in a beginner French class ("The rabbit of Easter. He bring of the chocolate"). This is the perfect introduction for the uninitiated, while Sedaris's fans will enjoy rediscovering old favorites. *Agent: Cristina Concepcion, Don Congdon Assoc. (Nov.)*

delight in this breezy survey of Windsor family fashions. *(Nov.)*

Living Without Plastic: More Than 100 Easy Swaps for Home, Travel, Dining, Holidays, and Beyond

Brigette Allen and Christine Wong. Artisan, $19.95 (256p) ISBN 978-1-57965-940-0

Bloggers Allen and Wong present an eye-opening guide on how to lessen one's dependence on plastics. The authors make a strong case that consumers can't recycle their way out of plastic's deleterious effects on the environment, so a total rethink of habits is necessary. They offer substitutions for almost every type of plastic one can think of—and some plastics that one may not think about at all, such as Scotch tape and chewing gum, in place of which rubber adhesive and cellulose can be used. Among the alternatives are recipes for hair spray, water filters, and watercolors alongside photos of ingredients and creations made from all-natural products. Knowing how to sew opens up many options, since one can make gauze pads (sewn cotton scraps) to replace those blended with plastics, plastic wrap (recycled fabric with a DIY wax coating), and other solutions with ease. Though some claims about plastic's harm to a person's health (such as that plastic within a sippy cup can be "absorb[ed] through the baby's skin") could use more robust scientific explanations, readers will walk away convinced of the harm the proliferation of plastic causes people and the planet. This is a clarion, convincing wake-up call to the scope of the global plastic problem and what readers can do about it. *(Nov.)*

Humans Are Not Robots: Why We All Need Work Flexibility and What Company Leaders Can Do About It

Robert Hawkins. Maven House, $29.95 (288p) ISBN 978-1-947540-04-0

The way people work today isn't working, argues consultant Hawkins in this persuasive study that examines why and how to change it. The modern office, he argues, enforces rigid schedules and rules in a way that might be well-suited for robots, but is a disaster for humans' mental and physical health. "It's not right to feel terrible and exhausted on a daily basis, to crave weekends, and to turn a desperate shade of blue every time Sunday night arrives," Hawkins writes. The author believes most industries, beyond certain obvious exceptions such as ER physicians, can and should embrace flexibility of working schedules and of location. He recommends management think bigger than occasional remote work or job-sharing, including "results-only work environments," in which employees "can work whenever and wherever and however they choose, as long as they're producing what's expected of them," or annualized hours, which means working a set number of hours with "the freedom to choose when those hours are worked." Hawkins also urges trying out different models, being transparent about expectations, and making sure employees know their well-being comes first. Well-timed given the pervasiveness of remote work during the pandemic, Hawkins's persuasive case will resonate with business leaders trying to imagine their way through the post-lockdown era. *(Nov.)*

★ A Question of Freedom: The Families Who Challenged Slavery from the Nation's Founding to the Civil War

William G. Thomas III. Yale Univ., $35 (432p) ISBN 978-0-300-23412-1

Thomas, a history professor at the University of Nebraska, debuts with a revelatory and fluidly written chronicle of attempts by enslaved families in Prince George's County, Md., to win their freedom through the courts. Many of these men and women were held at the Jesuit-owned White Marsh tobacco plantation, and profits derived from their labor—or from their sale to slaveholders in the deep South—helped to finance Georgetown University. In 1791, two men enslaved at White Marsh sued the Jesuits for their freedom, basing their argument on claims that they were descended from free women of color. Their lawsuits "opened the floodgates," Thomas writes, leading to "more than a thousand legal actions against hundreds of slaveholding families" in the county. He convincingly characterizes these "freedom suits" as "a public counterpart of the Underground Railroad" that forced a reckoning with the patchwork of laws supporting slavery. Moving profiles of Edward Queen, one of the original litigants, and Thomas Butler, whose family won their freedom suit against Supreme Court justice Gabriel Duvall, reclaim the humanity of slavery's victims, and Thomas's discovery that his own ancestors held Queen's relatives in bondage adds emotional and historical nuance. The result is an essential account of an overlooked chapter in the history of American slavery. *Agent: Wendy Strothman, Strothman Literary. (Nov.)*

The Story of China: The Epic History of a World Power from the Middle Kingdom to Mao and the China Dream

Michael Wood. St. Martin's, $32.50 (624p) ISBN 978-1-250-20257-4

Documentarian Wood (*The Story of England*) chronicles 4,000 years of Chinese history in this brisk and accessible account. Moving chronologically from China's distant past to the events of the past century, Wood pays particular attention to the country's long history of global encounters. Highlights include descriptions of life in a Han dynasty postal station on the Silk Road between the first century BCE and 107 CE, and an account of Jesuit priest Matteo Ricci's attempt to "bridge civilizations" by accepting Chinese "beliefs and rituals for the veneration of the dead" in the early 17th century. Wood also details social unrest and rising foreign influence after the Opium Wars and the Taiping rebellion, and documents "mass hysteria" sparked by Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution in the 1960s, including the destruction of family heirlooms and cultural relics by Red Guards, and the massacre of 9,000 men, women, and children by local Communist party bosses in the town of Daoxian in Hunan province. Deeply researched and energetically written, this immersive account is a worthy introduction to the vast sweep of Chinese history and culture. *(Nov.)*

The Power Age: A Blueprint for Maturing with Style

Kelly Doust. Apollo, $29.99 (340p) ISBN 978-1-948062-70-1

In this uplifting collection of interviews, Doust (*A Life in Frocks*) shares the wisdom, experience, and advice of successful women over the age of 50. As an attempt to turn the tides on society's deification of youth, Doust interviews a bevy of professionals—doctors, journalists, nutritionists, and sociologists among them—who detail and celebrate the process of getting older. Doust begins with women who describe healthy aging as the foundation of a good life, along with advice on stress reduction and staying fit. She then looks at how what one wears can affect confidence, interviews a stylist, and offers fashion tips for age appropriate yet moderately priced outfits such as "high-low" thrift shop fashion. Doust's subjects also explore how experiences (particularly international travel) increase "cultural curiosity," which Doust complements with travel and volunteering ideas for readers to plan a trip. Colorful profiles of prominent women, such as Ruth Bader Ginsberg, Yoko Ono, Helen Mirren, and Michelle Obama provide inspiration alongside the more clinical, professional advice on topics that include financial management, finding meaningful work, saving for retirement, and sexuality. In the standout interview, physician Ginni Mansberg offers a revealing, honest discussion of menopause. This eclectic survey of women who followed their passions will encourage and inspire. *(Nov.)*

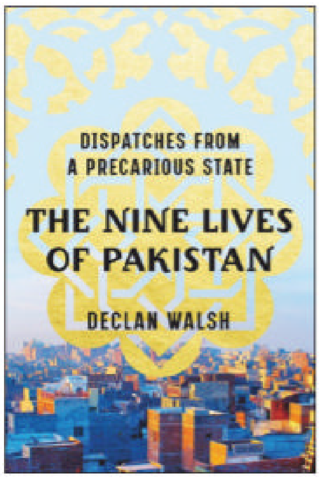
One in a Billion: One Man's Remarkable Odyssey Through Modern-Day China

Nancy Pine. Rowman & Littlefield, $34 (412p) ISBN 978-1-5381-4340-7

Education scholar Pine debuts with an inspiring and exhaustive profile of An Wei, a Chinese peasant who has risen to become an "educated professional" and "a guiding light for young Chinese who want to improve their homeland." Born in 1942 in the village of An Shang in Shaanxi Province, An Wei was seven years old when Mao Zedong's Communist forces seized power from the Nationalists under Chiang Kai-Shek. Growing up, An Wei survived famine, political purges, and oppression by local party bosses to become an interpreter for foreign dignitaries including Jimmy Carter, a translator of American journalist Helen Snow's books on the early days of Communist China, a leader of cultural exchange programs with the U.S., and a party secretary in An Shang. An Wei brought a series of political and social reforms to the village, and in 2003 spearheaded the first "villagers congress" to approve a five-year plan for An Shang. Pine details how the new congress found widespread corruption in the previous regime, and brought the first personal computers to An Shang. Combining

★ The Nine Lives of Pakistan: Dispatches from a Precarious State

Declan Walsh. Norton, $30 (352p) ISBN 978-0-393-24991-0



Journalist Walsh debuts with an immersive and splendidly written portrait of Pakistan based on the nine years he spent in the country reporting for the *Guardian* and the *New York Times*. He begins with his 2013 arrest and expulsion from the country for "undesirable activities" (Walsh later came to believe that his reporting on an insurgent movement in Balochistan province got him kicked out), then profiles nine people whose stories provide valuable perspective on Pakistan's volatile politics and "endearing absurdities," as well as its cultural traditions and modern aspirations. Walsh's profile subjects include the "most famous cop in Karachi," Chaudhry Aslam Khan, whose office "had the gleam of a mortuary and the furtive bustle of a mobster's den," and human rights activist Asma Jahangir, a "cast-iron idealist" who "embraced the untouchable and advocated the unthinkable, leading indefatigable campaigns to reform Pakistan's bigoted laws or to protect its most vulnerable minorities." Walsh also probes the history of ISI, Pakistan's fearsome intelligence agency, and interviews one of its best known spies, Colonel Imam, who trained mujahideen fighters in the war against the Soviet Union in the 1980s and was kidnapped by the Taliban in 2010. Rich with incisive historical context, astute cultural analysis, and evocative language, Walsh's account brings Pakistan's contradictions to fascinating life. This masterfully reported account deserves a wide readership. *(Nov.)*

lucid, concise descriptions of China's history with intimate details of peasant commune life culled from a decade's worth of interviews with An Wei, Pine presents an eye-opening portrait of how ordinary Chinese people can become driving forces for reform. Readers seeking to go beyond the headlines about China will learn much from this account. *(Nov.)*

I Ain't Marching Anymore: Dissenters, Deserters, and Objectors to America's Wars

Chris Lombardi. New Press, $27.99 (336p) ISBN 978-1-62097-317-2

Journalist Lombardi debuts with a well-researched and wide-ranging history of America's "soldier-dissenters" and their efforts to speak truth to power. She contends that Revolutionary War soldiers who refused to fire their weapons in combat or defied orders to guard private farms helped to define what it would mean to be an American citizen, and details how "paltry soldier's wages" and new taxes to pay off war debts sparked an armed uprising in Massachusetts in 1786. Disenchantment with plans to add Texas as a slave state led to mass desertions during the Mexican-American War, Lombardi notes, and set the stage for the Civil War, which saw acts of courage and defiance on both sides. Quaker soldiers served as medics or fled to Canada, while Black men and women, including Harriet Tubman and Lewis Douglass, the son of abolitionist Frederick Douglass, eagerly proved their mettle in combat. WWI and WWII saw harsher penalties for desertion, crackdowns on conscientious objectors, and battles to integrate the military. Lombardi also describes Vietnam War veteran John Kerry's involvement in the antiwar movement, details protests by soldiers who enlisted after 9/11 and became disillusioned with the war on terror, and profiles Iraq War whistleblower Chelsea Manning. The wealth of detail impresses, though some sections drag. Still, this is an enlightening roundup of the long tradition of resistance within America's armed forces. *(Nov.)*

The Best American Travel Writing 2020

Edited by Robert Macfarlane. Mariner, $16.99 trade paper (336p) ISBN 978-0-358-36203-6

Macfarlane opens this provocative but unfortunately timed entry in the long-running series with a sobering message: "I write from a world in which travel has stopped." Indeed, readers may feel a jarring sense of dissonance delving into suddenly anachronistic essays on unfettered travel, though they often are framed with still-relevant political conscience. Kyle Chayka probes what it means to have an "authentic" experience in Iceland, where tourists outnumbered inhabitants. Alejandra Oliva accompanies Central American migrants traveling north in hopes of entering the United States, and Jackie Bryant deposits water jugs in the Sonoran Desert for those who surreptitiously cross the border and risk dehydration. Lacy M. Johnson attends a memorial service for an Icelandic glacier that melted due to global warming. In a standout piece, Ashley Powers illuminates an essential Sicilian sense of multiculturalism through the lives of migrants who are revivifying Palermo's once abandoned alleyways. "We don't say, when we were invaded by Arabs," a Sicilian tells her. "We say, when we were Arabs." Shanna B. Tiayon similarly distills the U.S. into its essential parts when she describes a family vacation to the Grand Canyon marred by racism. These layered explorations of who travels how (and why) offer a discomfiting but rewarding armchair experience of the world at large. *Agent: Jim Rutman, Sterling Lord Literistic. (Nov.)*

High Tension: FDR's Battle to Power America

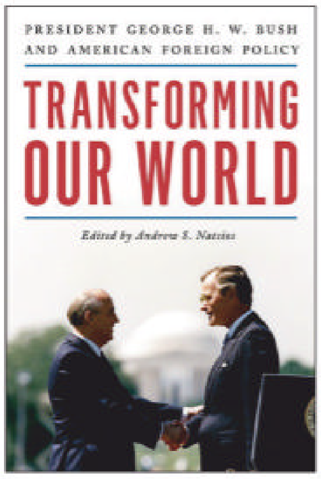
John A. Riggs. Diversion, $18.99 trade paper (336p) ISBN 978-1-63576-732-2

Riggs, a former official in the U.S. Department of Energy, debuts with an exhaustive look at President Franklin Roosevelt's multipronged war against the private utility sector. Before 1933, Riggs notes, "nine holding companies... managed about three-quarters of the nation's power." The "vast share" of profits from electrifying the U.S. were pocketed by the companies' owners rather than reinvested, according to Riggs, and rural farms were often left in the dark. During the 1932 presidential campaign, Roosevelt promised to unravel the holding companies, construct massive government dams to power the electrical grid, and push for rural electrification. The opposition was led by energy company CEO (and 1940 Republican presidential nominee) Wendell Willkie. Riggs dives deep into the legislative, judicial, and public opinion battles over Roosevelt's energy initiatives, including the Tennessee Valley Authority, and argues that the hybrid public-private system that emerged in America was critical to the nation's "economic global supremacy" during and after WWII. Thanks to Roosevelt, Riggs writes, "by the mid-1950s, almost all farms had electricity." Though somewhat ponderous in its level of specificity, this authoritative account is a valuable resource for students of America's energy policy. *(Nov.)*

Transforming Our World: President George H.W. Bush and American Foreign Policy

Edited by Andrew Natsios. Rowman & Littlefield, $38 (308p) ISBN 978-1-5381-4344-5

In this laudatory and highly technical essay anthology, Natsios (*Sudan, South Sudan, and Darfur: What Everyone Needs to Know*) and other alumni of the George H.W. Bush administration detail their former boss's foreign policy achievements. Presidential assistants Richard Haass and Chase Untermeyer contend that Bush's extensive foreign policy background and ability to "make friends" made him uniquely suited to navigating the end of the Cold War—an opinion enthusiastically shared by former German national security adviser Horst Teltschik, the only contributor who didn't serve under Bush. Other pieces document how the coalition against Iraq in the First Gulf War came together, detail reforms to the National Security Council in the wake of the Iran-Contra scandal, and draw a contrast between Ronald Reagan's sentimental connection to Israel and Bush's more "evenhanded" approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Though outsiders' criticisms of the Bush administration, including calls for a stronger U.S. response to the Tiananmen Square massacre and questions about the limited scope of the Gulf War (which left Saddam Hussein in power), are treated lightly, Natsios and his


PRESIDENT GEORGE H. W. BUSH AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY
TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD
Edited by Andrew S. Natsios

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July 15, 2019
THE TRUE STORY
of the woman who helped bring down serial abuser Larry Nassar and expose USA Gymnastics
"RACHAEL DENHOLLANDER IS A HERO. . . . I THANK HER FOR HER COURAGE."
Dominique Moceanu
New York Times bestselling author and Olympic gold medalist
"DO NOT MISS THIS INCREDIBLE TRUE STORY. . . . RACHAEL IS A LIVING EXAMPLE OF GRACE AND STRENGTH IN THE FIGHT AGAINST EVIL, AND I'M STANDING BY HER SIDE."
Terry Crews
Actor
WHAT IS A GIRL WORTH?
My story of breaking the silence and exposing the truth about Larry Nassar and USA Gymnastics
RACHAEL DENHOLLANDER
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cohorts succeed in burnishing Bush's legacy and advocating for a gradualist, multilateral approach to foreign policy. Students of international affairs will find this collection of insider perspectives illuminating. *(Nov.)*

★ Uncommon Grit: A Photographic Journey Through Navy SEAL Training

D. McBurnett. Grand Central, $50 (224p) ISBN 978-1-5387-3553-4

Retired U.S. Navy SEAL McBurnett documents the character of the elite special forces unit in his blunt and beautiful photographic chronicle of the intensive training required of SEAL recruits. McBurnett details the first four weeks of SEAL training with its culmination in "Hell Week," five days and nights of acute sleep deprivation, nonstop cold, and arduous exercise, endured in service of developing a mastery of physical and mental pain. Stunning photographs document the program in Coronado, Calif. Of the most grueling physical tests, McBurnett singles out the combat training tank exercises, such as the perilous 50-meter underwater swim, which provides "the first sneak peek to see if you have the mental capability to push you beyond your comfort zone." Full-page layouts mix black and white, color, and sepia photos of sand-covered grimacing soldiers as they haul huge logs overhead, are sprayed with water during sit-ups, or lie in a curving formation of bodies, battered by water on the tide line. (There's also an actual seal in the mix, oblivious on the beach.) McBurnett's artistry elevates the training of warriors with a mixture of bracing realism and cinematic romanticism, appealing as much to fine photography fans as the military crowd. *Agent: Howard Yoon, the Ross Yoon Agency. (Oct.)*

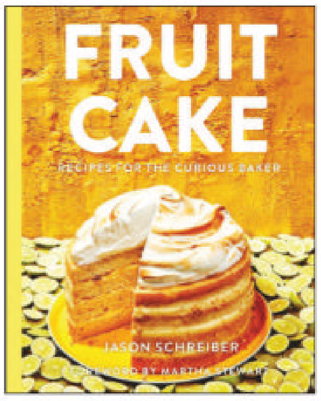
Lifestyle

Cooking

Fruit Cake: Recipes for the Curious Baker

Jason Schreiber. Morrow, $32.50 (272p) ISBN 978-0-06-297745-8

Food stylist Schreiber debuts with an inspiring collection of recipes for cakes enriched with fruit that will be a revelation for fruitcake skeptics. The volume opens with snackable desserts like poached pear and quince crumb cake, followed by handheld cakes that include delicate raspberry almond petit fours. Schreiber shines in his "Showstoppers" chapter, which features complex creations like a peanut butter and jelly cake brightened with a layer of strawberries and a decadent four-layer key lime confection. Last but not least are a number of sumptuous fruitcakes, such as a stout-soaked cake with dried tart cherries, apricots, candied ginger, and milk chocolate that will convert even the most vehement soaked-cake hater. Schreiber's chatty style keeps things relaxed, but can also distract, as in his chocolate caramel banana roulade, where he instructs bakers to refrigerate the filling "until you're ready to fill the cake, which I realize you probably aren't because I haven't told you how to make it yet." A sharp design comprising easy-to-follow ingredient grids and modern–vintage-feel photography adds a polished touch, and Schreiber's explanations of commonly misunderstood baking concepts (on room temperature: one's kitchen is not guaranteed to be it) round things out. This will tantalize bakers seeking a modern approach to classic desserts. *Agent: Sharon Bowers, Miller Bowers Griffin Literary Management. (Nov.)*



Chaat

Maneet Chauhan and Jody Eddy. Clarkson Potter, $32.50 (272p) ISBN 978-1-98482-388-5

Chef and *Chopped* judge Chauhan partners with food writer Eddy to reminisce on their travels via India's vast railway system, where food and beverage carts and markets offer passengers a quick bite or a drink. They collect a bounty of recipes, in four sections broken out regionally, beginning in the north, where Gajar ka Halwa (carrot pudding with saffron and pistachios) is served up in the junction station at Amritsar, and the popular street food, Nadir Monji (spicy, crispy-fried lotus root), gets paired with tamarind and green chutneys in Srinagar. To the west, there is the renowned Bombay sandwich of Mumbai, a panini-like affair filled with cheese, potato, beet, and other vegetables, while in the southern port of Mangalore—where, Chauhan says, "each visit has left an indelible mark upon" her as a chef—coffee is boiled with basil, cardamom, and ginger to create the sweet and spicy Chukku Kappi. Ending in the east, Chauhan returns to her hometown of Ranchi to rediscover a favorite childhood treat, the "universally beloved" puchkas (semolina puffs stuffed with potatoes and chutney, and spiked with cilantro-lime "spicy water"). Food photographer Linda Xiao does an outstanding job bringing color and texture to each plate and frothy glass. An entire country's quick eats come to the home kitchen in this transporting collection. *Agent: Jonah Straus, Straus Literary. (Oct.)*

Milk Street: Cookish: Throw It Together

Christopher Kimball et al. Voracious, $35 (352p) ISBN 978-0-316-54030-8

Milk Street founder Kimball (*Milk Street: The New Rules*) collects solid recipes with six ingredients or fewer that build flavor with powerhouse components rather than fussy prep. Most of these meals, in which "time is no longer the key ingredient," are prepared in a single pot. The simplicity is appealing and the flavors are bright: a salad of shredded fennel and celery root pops when tossed in mustard dressing, and harissa brings the heat to pasta with yogurt. Sections are conventionally broken down by main ingredient, but then subdivided by method, so that the section on beans and grains includes heating canned beans in a microwave, tossing in flavorings (like charred tomatoes) and allowing them to cool into a salad. Options are the name of the game: a quintet of dipping sauces is recommended for fried chicken cutlets, and shredded pork can be transformed with miso, rosemary and balsamic vinegar, or soy sauce and star anise. Globe-trotting cultural references include West African–style chicken with peanut butter, Balinese-style roasted pork shoulder, and Korean-style noodle soup with kimchi and gochujang chili paste. Desserts offer crowd-pleasers such as four differently spiced rice puddings. The quick-and-easy concept is carried out consistently, and this clever title will be a boon for weeknight cooks. *Agent: David Black, the David Black Agency. (Oct.)*

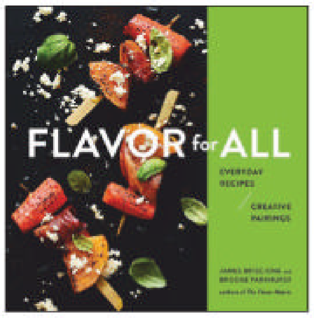
FLAVOR LAB

Two new books explore the science of taste

Flavor for All: Everyday Recipes and Creative Pairings

James Briscione and Brooke Parkhurst. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, $30 (256p) ISBN 978-0-358-16406-7

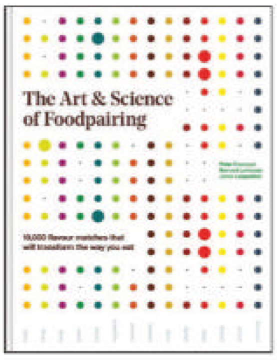
Husband-wife collaborators Briscione, a two-time *Chopped* champion, and Parkhurst follow 2018's *The Flavor Matrix* with an info-packed recipe collection focused on the fundamentals of flavor pairings. The 100 recipes are divided into categories such as vegetables, land, and sea, each annotated with flavor, taste, and chemical compound notes. For example, the chemistry underlying spicy kiwi and bacon grilled cheese sandwiches relies on the compound 3-carene and the aromas of bell pepper and lemon—as well as resin and rubber—to build flavor. If the scientific annotation proves to be a bit overwhelming, cooks can dive straight into the recipes, which lean toward Briscione's Southern roots. There's an unami-rich summer dish that combines clams and squash (compound: dimethylamine) with garlic, basil, and tomatoes. A chianti-braised beef with grits (compound: 2-phenylethanol), meanwhile, has notes of fruit, honey, lilac, and rose. Dessert stars include a decadent chocolate and red wine bread pudding, while cocktails feature temptations like a butternut old-fashioned. Each ingredient also gets labeled with its taste profile: i.e., garlic is umami; Dijon mustard both spicy and acidic; fresh pineapple sweet. Home cooks as curious about what goes on inside the pot as what goes into it will have a ball. *Agent: Joy Tutela, David Black Literary Agency. (Oct.)*



The Art and Science of Foodpairing: 10,000 Flavour Matches That Will Transform the Way You Eat

Peter Coucquyt, Bernard Lahousse, and Johan Langenbick. Firefly, $49.95 (384p) ISBN 978-0-22810-084-3

Science and data-visualization drive this intriguing graph-filled reference dedicated to engineering new flavor combinations. The team—chef Coucquyt, bioengineer Lahousse, and tech entrepreneur Langenbick—employ such analysis as "gas chromatography-mass spectrometry" and plenty of gusto to arrive at 70 "aroma descriptors," then map those smells to myriad food and drink items. Those options are then matched with a vast assortment of companion offerings, adding up to 10,000 (often surprising) flavor combinations. Results are plotted out using flowing and segmented taste wheels and color-coded grids. A brown dot, for example, represents the woody aroma with descriptors including balsamic, pine, and the compound phenolic. A deep dive into coffee finds that the drink has over a thousand different aroma molecules, though no more than 40 are perceivable by humans, and dictates that freshly brewed coffee shares the same floral and spicy notes as grilled green asparagus. French fries, meanwhile, have the caramel and roasted notes that make it a nice match with pan-fried pheasant or Japanese muskmelon. Restaurant professionals and intrepid amateurs will find plenty to ponder in this heady outing. *(Oct.)*



★ The New Sotheby's Wine Encyclopedia

Tom Stevenson and Orsi Szentkiralyi. National Geographic, $75 (800p) ISBN 978-1-42622-141-5

This full-bodied reference aims to be for wine-lovers an "encyclopedia to everything... whittled down to a graspable level" and absolutely delivers. Sotheby sommelier Szentkiralyi was brought on for this extensively revised and updated edition of a book originally published in 1988. The first of the volume's three parts explores wine basics with a rundown of grape varieties, a list of well-known barrel makers, a guide to aromas, and a cogent course in tasting. The second section offers a 10-page "chronology of wine" landmarks, from the Earth's first vine, circa 500 million years ago, to the 2020 Australian wildfires. The sprawling third section attempts no less than to catalog and explore every wine appellation on the planet. As such, these some 600 pages offer as much an atlas as an encyclopedia, complete with color maps, photos of verdant countryside, and hundreds of brief descriptions of production in territories both familiar, such as Alsace in France, and less expected, such as Bhutan. Sips of entertaining trivia ("Madeira gives its name to the only wine in the world that must be baked in an oven!") and historical perspective (Lebanon's wine-making heyday was "arguably in the second millennium BC... the toast of the Greeks and Romans") pour in along the way. Vast and varied, the scope of this impressive work would make Dionysus swoon. *(Oct.)*

* * *

The Pie Room: 80 Achievable and Show-Stopping Pies and Sides for Pie Lovers Everywhere

Calum Franklin. Bloomsbury, $30 (288p) ISBN 978-1-4729-7361-0

Chef Franklin will charm home bakers with this delicious glimpse into the pastry magic that happens in the "Pie Room" at his Holborn Dining Room restaurant in London. Starting with "Tools & Techniques," Franklin lays down building blocks including rolling pastry, then walks readers through essential equipment. Classic dough recipes follow, among them choux, puff, filo, and brioche. Dishes skew toward the savory, and bakers can dream up elegant dinner parties to make prawn Thermidor vol-au-vents or up the home Friday-night ante with options including a Moroccan chickpea and feta pie that's both elegant and substantial without taking hours to prepare, and kid-friendly surprises such as a "melting, gooey" mac 'n' cheese pie. A handful of sweet options are featured, among them the always-in-style glazed apple tart (which feels wonderfully British as it suggests clotted cream spooned alongside), and a rhubarb and custard tart made with shortcrust pastry, topped with vanilla-infused custard, and arranged with rhubarb batons. A chapter on side dishes showcases some of the restaurant's popular fare, with selections like "Perfect Hasselback Potatoes" and roasted carrots with cumin. Readers looking for hearty winter fare will want to give this a look. *(Oct.)*

Hobbies & Crafts

The Art of Kintsugi: Learning the Japanese Craft of Beautiful Repair

Alexandra Kitty. Schiffer, $27.99 (96p) ISBN 978-0-7643-6054-1

Journalist Kitty (*The Dramatic Moment of Fate*) presents a beautifully photographed and eloquent survey of kintsugi, the Japanese practice of repairing broken containers with powdered gold. Intended as a way of leaving repairs both noticeable and aesthetically appealing, the craft rests on the philosophy of wabi-sabi, which Kitty sums up as the belief in "accepting the impermanence of our life and our environment." After explaining kintsugi's philosophical underpinnings, Kitty shows how to use kintsugi on pottery, as well as for jewelry and statuary and in mixed-media works. Her step-by-step directions include advice on how best to apply kintsugi's traditional gold powder, a recipe for making the requisite rice glue, and guidance on how to apply the specific kind of lacquer, known as urushi, that can create the beautiful shine that kintsugi is known for. Kitty strongly advises against painting with gold pigment, which creates an overly artificial look, and gives suggestions for those who want to experiment with copper, bronze, or silver powders. Kitty's loving overview of this ancient Japanese tradition will appeal to many crafters, both for the aesthetic possibilities it opens up and as an art based on "one of the most powerful and resilient beliefs: that we can triumph over catastrophe." *(Oct.)*

How to Weave a Navajo Rug and Other Lessons from Spider Woman

Barbara Teller Ornelas and Lynda Teller Pete. Thrums, $29.95 (152p) ISBN 978-1-73442-170-5

Fifth-generation weavers Ornelas and Pete (Spider Woman's Children) offer experienced weavers inspiring instruction in the art of creating Navajo rugs. They first relate the craft's origin story: the deity Spider Woman gave the skill to the Navajo people after she was taught to weave the universe by a spider god. Ornelas and Pete clarify that Navajo weaving was not borrowed either from the Pueblo or Europeans, as some historians posit. They describe the sheep that traditionally provided the wool, though they, and most fellow Navajo weavers, now use mill-spun yarn. Carding (combing and cleaning the wool) is consequently less important, but, they state, still a rewarding community activity, and a good way of "blending different colors of wool together to create a greater range of hues." While also touching briefly on making blankets and tapestries, the authors spend most of the book on the rug project, providing instructions that are intricate, detailed, and, for those new to weaving, intimidating. They also include notes on cultural symbolism (the vertical yarn lines on the loom represent sky, lightning, clouds, and rain) and a smattering of humor ("having a warped sense of humor" helps when using a warp frame). Ornelas and Pete's passion for their craft and their heritage results in a lovely and unique crafting resource. *(Oct.)*

Home & Garden

Deer-Resistant Native Plants for the Northeast

Ruth Rogers Clausen and Gregory D. Tepper. Timber, $19.95 trade paper (208p) ISBN 978-1-60469-986-9

Growing native plants to encourage wildlife is a new trend in gardening, according to this helpful primer from Clausen, former horticulture editor for *Country Living Garden* magazine, and horticulturist Tepper. Thanks to gardeners' interest in cultivating a healthy landscape for foraging birds and pollinating insects, plant species "once considered simple roadside wildflowers are now sought after as attractive and enviable additions to the garden plant palette." The fly in the ointment is the white-tailed deer, which can ravage a garden and, more generally, deplete an environment capable of sustaining other wildlife. To help gardeners repel them, Clausen and Tepper go over 75 deer-resistant native plant species and how and where to plant them—Christmas fern "is most content on shady, wooded slopes and at the base of trees," where it helps "hold leaf debris in place that acts as mulch," while tufted grass "is an excellent addition to any meadow edge, or massed in beds and borders." The tips are accompanied by plentiful color photos and pithy sidebars—à la "Deer Candy: Native Plants That Deer Prefer!" For gardeners looking to create natural space that will serve as lasting havens for pollinators and birds, this practical guide will prove the ticket. *(Feb.)*

Growing Under Cover: Techniques for a More Productive, Weather-Resistant, Pest-Free Vegetable Garden

Niki Jabbour. Storey, $24.95 trade paper (216p) ISBN 978-1-63586-131-0

Jabbour (*Niki Jabbour's Veggie Garden Remix*), *Savvy Gardening* blogger and radio host, offers a helpful guide to creating enclosures for vegetable gardens, in order to "grow more food for a longer period of time, grow higher-quality plants bothered by fewer pests and diseases, and mitigate the stresses caused by cold, heat, and extreme weather." The idea, she points out, is nothing new: "The first reference to using a greenhouse-like structure for growing food comes from Pliny the Elder in the first century CE." But, as Jabbour shows here, the practice has evolved to include structures large (polytunnels and geodesic domes), small (cold frames and mini-hoop tunnels), and very small (a plastic one-gallon milk jug with the top removed). She highlights the strategy's advantages, including protection from insects and other predators and greater environmental control—each structure creates its own microclimate that maintains "a dance of heating and cooling, venting and maintaining humidity." Aided by abundant color photos, Jabbour further discusses

GROWING
UNDER
COVER
TECHNIQUES FOR A More Productive, Weather-Resistant, Pest-Free Vegetable Garden
NIKI JABBOUR

determining which structures work best for which plants, and then building the covering one chooses. Her guidance will prove invaluable for vegetable gardeners determined to safeguard and prolong a robust harvest throughout the year. *(Dec.)*

Creating Scrap Blocks with Character

Olesya Lebedenko. Landauer, $14.99 trade paper (112p) ISBN 978-1-947163-42-3

With this pleasing collection of animal and seasonal designs, quilting teacher Lebedenko provides a convincing answer to a question all crafters face at some point: what to do with leftover material. To that end, Lebedenko challenged herself to put her overflowing piles of scrap fabrics to good use, and the results are 60 scrap block patterns, all 3.5-inch squares and relatively easy to make using basic patchwork sewing. Creating blocks from many small bits of fabric will require patience, and perhaps some eye-strain, but the projects are appealing, and for beginners, Lebedenko provides a brief but informative section on putting a patchwork block together from start to finish. Seasonal delights include an assortment of Santa-themed blocks, which can be combined into holiday quilts or framed as stand-alone decorative items, and, for Halloween, ghosts, witches, and goblins. Meanwhile, pet lovers and fitness enthusiasts will appreciate Lebedenko's Cat Yoga patterns, involving a remarkably flexible feline. Sewing and quilting artists with baskets of scraps will find enough projects to keep them occupied year-round. *(Oct.)*

Royal Gardens of the World: 25 Celebrated Gardens from the Alhambra to Highgrove and Beyond

Mark Lane. Kyle, $45 (240p) ISBN 978-0-85783-801-8

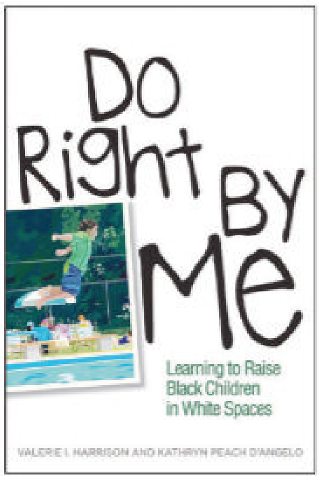
Lane, a host of the BBC television series *Gardeners' World*, conducts a "Grand Tour" of "some of the most iconic royal gardens" around the world in his tasteful if buttoned-up guide. Writing that these spaces, at their best, "leave a living legacy, a natural work of art, which adapts, morphs and reinvents itself," Lane chooses sites for their impact on garden design and history, as well as accessibility (all gardens included are open to the public). Highlights include the fountains of Versailles, picked to demonstrate the importance of water features in French gardens, and Austria's Shönbrunn, with its 10,000 varieties of daffodils. Lane also explores the gardens surrounding India's Taj Mahal, designed to evoke "the four gardens of paradise mentioned in the Qur'an," and the U.K.'s Highgrove, which reveals its owner, Prince Charles, as a "devoted environmentalist." Lane's somewhat staid account, however, fails to provide a feeling of being on the ground or to viscerally evoke a garden's sights and sounds, though the beautiful color photographs compensate a little. This survey is akin to a comfortable guided bus tour: pleasant but otherwise unremarkable. *(Oct.)*

Parenting

★ Do Right by Me: Learning to Raise Black Children in White Spaces

Valerie I. Harrison and Kathryn Peach D'Angelo. Temple Univ., $20 (194p) ISBN 978-1-4399-1995-8

Longtime friends Harrison, an attorney, and D'Angelo, Temple University's assistant vice president for administration and planning, present a superb guide for white parents raising Black children. D'Angelo, the white adoptive parent of a biracial son, Gabe, and Harrison, who is Black and childless, share both personal experiences and cultural analysis. For instance, after D'Angelo recounts her son's reluctance to join an otherwise all-white soccer team at age four, Harrison explains his reaction as reflecting how being different in itself can be damaging to self-identity. D'Angelo also discusses how raising Gabe makes her more aware of white privilege—at one point, she becomes angry at her husband for modeling, in front of Gabe, aggressive "behavior that would get our child killed," after which Harrison recalls being warned, as a child, by elders of the danger racially biased policing poses to Black people. More generally, Harrison exhorts parents to educate themselves about how historic discrimination in housing and hiring and under the law continues to affect African Americans, and to make sure kids understand "that when they see Black people in profound disadvantage, it is not because Black people are somehow deficient." This timely examination of discrimination and privilege is packed with insight and will be a great resource for white parents raising children of color. *(Nov.)*


Do Right By Me
Learning to Raise Black Children in White Spaces
VALERIE I. HARRISON AND KATHRYN PEACH D'ANGELO

12 Principles for Raising a Child with ADHD

Russell A. Barkley. Guilford, $16.95 trade paper (204p) ISBN 978-1-4625-4255-0

Clinical psychologist Barkley successfully distills the most practical material from his comprehensive parenting manual, *Taking Charge of ADHD*, into a concise and accessible guide. Devoting a chapter to each of 12 "principles," he begins by laying out his position that ADHD is a biological disorder, not the willful "behavior problem" educators and fellow mental-health professionals sometimes treat it as. Barkley further explains that children who have the disorder struggle with executive function in general, as well as impulsivity. He encourages parents to work with their children to develop a deeper sense of time beyond the present (in the chapter "Make Time Real") and a greater awareness of the consequences of their actions (in "Promote Your Child's Self-Awareness and Accountability"), but first and foremost to "Use the Keys to Success" by having one's child professionally diagnosed, identifying his or her particular strengths and talents, finding resources to develop these abilities, and accepting and supporting one's child unconditionally. Barkley also recommends letting go of less important demands, such as household chores, and, for the sake of one's own well-being, cultivating mindfulness and forgiveness. Parents in Barkley's target audience should find his guide to be a valuable and reassuring go-to. *(Oct.)*

Religion/Spirituality

Black & Buddhist: What Buddhism Can Teach Us About Race, Resilience, Transformation, & Freedom

Edited by Pamela Ayo Yetunde and Cheryl A. Giles. Shambhala, $19.95 trade paper (224p) ISBN 978-1-61180-865-0

In this excellent anthology, meditation instructor Yetunde (*The Inheritance*) and psychologist Giles (*The Arts of Contemplative Care*) collect works by Black Buddhist practitioners that explore racial trauma and resilience through the practices of Buddhism. The eight authors cover such diverse Buddhist traditions as Zen, Shambhala, Tibetan, and Theravadan—framed by Yetunde and Giles's assertion that Buddhism is "a path to de-caste or decolonize one's mind" while nurturing resilience despite trauma. The Black experience is the centerpiece in this text, and all of the volume's authors grapple with the suffering tied to their racialization. Giles opens with an essay on how the Black American experience parallels the Buddha's own journey: "The legacy of black enslaved bodies is a powerful example of the enduring spirit of resistance and love that serves as a reminder that freedom is possible." Sebene Selassie explores how Western "exoticizing and patronizing tropes" toward Asian religions have distorted their true meaning and often caused disconnection from one's heritage. This timely exploration brings a much-needed contribution of Black voices to Buddhist popular literature. *(Dec.)*

A Church Called Tov: Forming a Goodness Culture That Resists Abuses of Power and Promotes Healing

Scot McKnight and Laura Barringer. Tyndale Momentum, $22.99 (256p) ISBN 978-1-4964-4600-8

In this powerful work, father-daughter team McKnight (*The Jesus Creed*) and Barringer use their experiences with misconduct by a pastor at their local church as a springboard to explore how toxic church cultures develop and persist, and how to nurture healthier congregations. The authors describe attending Willow Creek Community Church and the allegations of sexual harassment against pastor Bill Hybels in 2018, and they argue that a celebrity culture around a pastor (like the one around Hybels) is the single most dangerous sign of a toxic culture within a church, followed by loyalty to an institution rather than to fellow congregants. To protect against these tendencies, the authors recommend congregations seek to nurture empathy, grace, truth-telling, justice, service, and imitation of Jesus, as well as resisting top-down initiatives and "institutional creep" by making one's church service-oriented. The authors also suggest building empathy by using church services to tell the stories of marginalized people in the Bible, as well as in church and local history. Their vision of a church based on empathy, confession, and repentance provides a pathway for those seeking to create a more welcoming congregation. Churchgoers and aspiring church leaders will find much wisdom here. *(Nov.)*

Demonic Foes: My Twenty-Five Years as a Psychiatrist Investigating Possessions, Diabolic Attacks, and the Paranormal

Richard Gallagher. HarperOne, $27.99 (256p) ISBN 978-0-06-287647-8

Psychiatrist Gallagher combines experiences from his practice and from witnessing exorcisms with academic interpretations of exorcism accounts in this beguiling memoir. Putting his "professional qualifications on the line," to write the book, Gallagher, a devout Catholic, recounts how he first became interested in "psychosomatic medicine" after his brother claimed to be healed of various physical ailments by a witch in France. The author first observed possession firsthand after an American Catholic priest asked Gallagher to evaluate a patient in a psychiatric hospital who described her condition as "demonic oppression." True demonic oppression and possession, Gallagher contends, are rare and feature several distinctive attributes—superhuman strength, aversion to sacred objects, and "speaking foreign languages or possessing hidden knowledge." Gallagher details cases, five of which he gives a personal account, like that of Anneliese Michel, who received a Catholic exorcism in Germany in 1975, and his engagement in the early 1990s with the hair-raising Satanic priestess "Julia" who "was never delivered from her demonic presence." A lack of verifiable empirical evidence about any of the cases covered, however, will fail to convince skeptics and critics. Regardless, Gallagher's piquant accounts should appeal to believers. *(Nov.)*

The Life You Long For: Learning to Live from a Heart of Rest

Christy Nockels. Multnomah, $23.99 (240p) ISBN 978-0-593-19254-2

Singer and songwriter Nockels challenges readers to do away with relying on accomplishments, milestones, or career goals in order to "pursue the dreams God placed in your heart." Drawing from scripture, Nockels defines the highest calling for believers as "to be loved by God and take your place as His child" and explains how she learned to surrender, trust God to reorder her life, and find joy and contentment in his words. She describes how quarantine living has revealed society's previous hectic pace—driven by an "outside-in" living, based on the demands and expectations of others—and contrasts this with living "inside-out," which demands one first embrace "the calling of the Beloved" inside oneself to structure one's life. Despite the cultural tendency to view bigger as better, she encourages readers to resist lofty expectations for "big, beautiful events" and to replace them with happiness based in treasuring the small joys in life. Christians looking to slow down and form more intimate relationships will enjoy Nockels's impassioned reminder that God provides a community and love to those who ask. *(Nov.)*

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FICTION

Fauna *Christiane Vadnais, trans. from the French by Pablo Strauss*. Coach House, ISBN 978-1-55245-416-9, Sept.

A Killing Frost *Seanan McGuire*. DAW, ISBN 978-0-7564-1508-2, Sept.

Prime Deceptions *Valerie Valdes*. Harper Voyager, ISBN 978-0-06-287725-3, Sept.

The Secret Ingredient. *K.D. Fisher*. Carina Adores, ISBN 978-1-335-95714-6, Oct.

She Gets That from Me. *Robin Wells*. Berkley, ISBN 978-1-9848-0200, Sept.

The Vicar and the Rake *Annabelle Greene*, Carina, ISBN 978-0-369-70007-0, Oct.

A World Between *Emily Hashimoto*, Feminist Press, ISBN 978-1-936932-95-5, Sept.

NONFICTION

Ten Lessons for a Post-Pandemic World *Fareed Zakaria*. Norton, ISBN 978-0-393-54213-4, Oct.

Voices from the Valley: Tech Workers Talk About What They Do—and How They Do It *Ben Tarnoff and Moira Weigel*. FSG Originals x Logic, ISBN 978-0-374-53867-5, Oct.

Children's/YA

Holiday Picture Books

Hanukkah Picture Books

The Ninth Night of Hanukkah

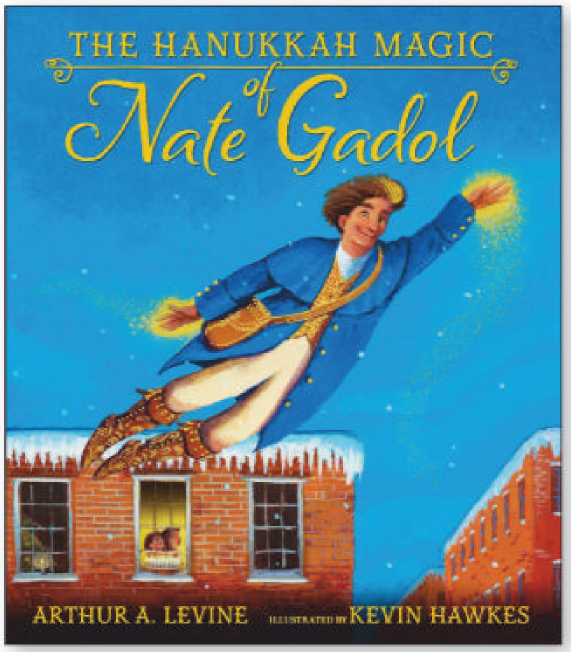
Erica S. Perl, illus. by Shahar Kober. Sterling Children's, $16.95 (40p) ISBN 978-1-4549-4088-3

When a family moves into a new apartment on the first night of Hanukkah, they can't find any of the things they typically use to celebrate—neither menorah nor lucky latke pan, neither dreidel nor gelt. Siblings Rachel and Max exercise ingenuity amid the piles of unpacked boxes, though, building a menorah, improvising an oversize dreidel out of an umbrella and a cardboard circle, and calling on a neighbor in search of candles. Though "it didn't feel quite like Hanukkah," Perl writes, they find a building full of people happy to help—Joe the super's freshly made French fries almost make up for the lack of latkes. When the Hanukkah items finally arrive the day after the eight-night holiday ends, Max notes that menorahs actually have nine candles, and the family invites friends over for a big celebration on night nine. Alongside matter-of-fact prose, unassuming, warm pictures by Kober make this a lovely tale of holiday-making and community-building in a multicultural world. Ages 3–up. *(Sept.)*

The Eight Knights of Hanukkah

Leslie Kimmelman, illus. by Galia Bernstein. Holiday House, $17.99 (48p) ISBN 978-0-8234-3958-4

After a dragon causes damage that puts a crimp in preparations for a kingdom-wide Hanukkah party, Lady Sadie charges her ethnically diverse children, the Eight Knights of Hanukkah, with engaging in "deeds of awesome kindness and stupendous bravery" to undo it. Sir Gabriel peels a mound of potatoes for latkes, Sir Lily steps in to make a huge batch of sufganiyot, and Sir Henry cleans the entire castle and brings his mother a cup of tea. Sir Isabella and Sir Rugelach, on the hunt throughout, finally encounter the dragon, who turns out to be a cute and unfairly labeled critter named Rosie—and an ace menorah lighter. Party on! Kimmelman and Bernstein's gentle spoof employs just enough amusing medieval jokes (Sir Gabriel dons an apron that reads "Kisseth the cook" in Gothic type) to make the core idea fun to grasp: it takes good deeds of all shapes and sizes to make the world go 'round. Ages 4–8. *(Sept.)*



Levine and Hawkes craft a Hanukkah myth for modern U.S. readers (reviewed on this page).

The Hanukkah Magic of Nate Gadol

Arthur A. Levine, illus. by Kevin Hawkes. Candlewick, $19.99 (40p) ISBN 978-0-7636-9741-9

Hanukkah isn't Jewish Christmas, so why do some American Jewish kids get presents for the holiday? Levine answers by creating a new mythic character, "great big spirit" Nate Gadol, whose name recalls the first half of the sentence symbolized by the letters on the dreidel: *nes gadol hayah sham* ("a great miracle happened there"). Drawn by Hawkes as radiantly dashing in a Revolutionary War–era waistcoat, Nate has a special talent: as an answer to prayer, "He made things last as long as they needed to." He created the miracle of the oil lasting for eight nights in ancient times, and he's suited to "making butter stretch for an important cake or keeping a dam strong in a storm." Nate is also buddies with Santa, so when hard times hit a hard-working immigrant neighborhood in 1881, the two collaborate to ensure that neither holiday is shortchanged. In fact, Nate is able to stretch Santa's gifts for the Irish O'Malley family so there's enough chocolate—and presents—for the Jewish Glaser family, too. Some readers will take issue with this nod to consumer culture, but for those who do practice present giving, this visually stunning "supplementary mythology," as Levine writes in an author's note, seeks to "enhance our experience without changing the religious observance and meaning of Jewish holidays." Ages 5–8. *(Sept.)*

The Littlest Candle: A Hanukkah Story

Kerry Olitzky and Jesse Olitzky, illus. by Jen Kostman. Kalaniot, $17.99 (32p) ISBN 978-0-9988527-5-1

At Hanukkah, it's the candles' "chance to shine," and each, including Shabbat and Havdalah candles, is clamoring to be chosen for the first night. All, that is, except a small, shy purple candle named Little Flicker: "Even if he raised his hand, his wick wasn't high enough to be seen." But a few of the more self-aware big candles begin to realize that Little Flicker is a real mensch who puts others' needs ahead of his own, and who understands that "Hanukkah is a reminder that sometimes, even when you are small, you are still capable of miracles." What better candle to be the shamas, or helping candle—the one that traditionally occupies the "highest place of the menorah"? Kostman's simple compositions have an unpolished feel, but they impart character-driven interest to the Olitzkys' calm, sermonlike narrative, allowing the message to shine through. Ages 4–7. *(Sept.)*

Christmas Picture Books

All the Colors of Christmas

Matthew Paul Turner, illus. by Gillian Gamble. Convergent, $12.99 (40p) ISBN 978-0-525-65414-8

Turner presents a vivid holiday palette by listing various colors featured at Christmastime and spotlighting favorite traditions and images associated with each hue. "Christmas is RED./ It's a shiny new sled," "Christmas is GREEN./ It's an evergreen scene," and "Christmas is GOLD./ It's bright ribbon unrolled." An inclusively portrayed, cozily clad crew of cheerful children bustle through bucolic scenes, decorating a house, ice skating, attending a holiday festival, performing in a Nativity play, giving gifts, and more. Finally, Turner reminds readers

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OF THANKS AND THANKSGIVING

Picture books celebrate autumnal festivals and feasts.

The Giving Day

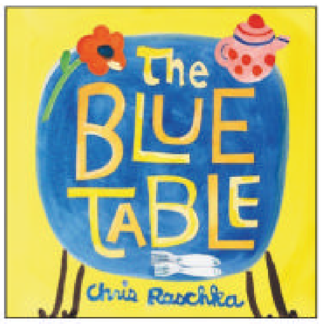
Cori Doerrfeld. Abrams, $17.99 (40p) ISBN 978-1-4197-4419-8

In this follow-up to *The Welcome Wagon,* the title refers to a big community festival held in Doerrfeld's animal-populated Cubby Hill. There are games, food, and activities, and, best of all, "everyone brought some way to give back." Cooper the bear attends with his grandmother to distribute their beehives' final takings; he wears a cape and declares himself "the Greatest Honey Hero in the Universe!" But he also spreads himself a little too thin, volunteering to help rabbit neighbors who need a "bunnysitter," among other deeds. The jars of honey invariably take a hit, but Cooper's pals are quick to advocate for him with his grandmother, who pronounces him "the greatest gift giver in the universe." Doerrfeld deftly choreographs busy animals bustling about the fairgrounds, energized by the prospect of doing good in the company of family and friends. Ages 3–7. *(Oct.)*

★ The Blue Table

Chris Raschka. Greenwillow, $17.99 (32p) ISBN 978-0-06-293776-6

Spare text and images center the titular cerulean table, around which a small family—and later, a second—gathers to share meals and gratitude. Instead of showing human figures, Caldecott Medalist Raschka showcases tabletop objects and dishes from a bird's-eye view, which appear and disappear as the pages turn. In colorful illustrations crafted from watercolor and cut-paper collage, a glass of milk first signifies "a child." Across the gutter, the addition of a coffee cup and saucer to the surface indicates another arrival—"a parent." And a page turn later, "another parent" joins, the table now host to a second coffee cup, a plate of cinnamon rolls, and activities befitting a comfortable breakfast (a newspaper, a book, crayons and paper). "Good things/ from the garden,// the store,/ and the farm" are assembled next, among them veggies and a turkey, and a leaf is added to the blue table in preparation for "one more family." Images include hands and forearms in a variety of skin tones as all gather, "thankful," for a many-coursed meal. A gentle picture book that celebrates the joy to be found in both everyday routines and holiday abundance. Ages 4–8. *(Oct.)*



Friendsgiving

Nancy Siscoe, illus. by Sabina Gibson. HarperCollins/Balzer + Bray, $17.99 (40p) ISBN 978-0-06-295676-7

In immersive photographed scenes and dialogue-heavy narration, the handmade anthropomorphic pals from *Snow Much Fun!*—apricot-colored fox Ginger, white bear Berry, and cornflower blue rabbit Willow—head out for a bike ride on a "great day in fall." After biking to the top of Lookout Hill, the trio decides to visit the farmer's market, where they run into old friend Honey, a yellow bear, and Honey's friend Rowan, a raccoon. The group gives thanks, goes apple picking, harvests crops, and finally throws an autumnal celebration. The story focuses more on friendly connections than on narrative arc, but it generously emphasizes the importance of meals cooked and shared with pals. Ages 4–8. *(Sept.)*

Peyton Picks the Perfect Pie: A Thanksgiving Celebration

Jack Bishop, illus. by Michelle Mee Nutter. America's Test Kitchen Kids, $17.99 (32p) ISBN 978-1-948703-26-0

Biracial Peyton, who has a Black dad and a white mom, isn't picky when it comes to a lot of things—she "likes dogs *and* cats, scooters *and* bikes, pools *and* beaches," Bishop writes—but she has preferences surrounding food, especially around colors and textures. Her parents put a lot of effort into hosting their annual Thanksgiving dinner, however, so Peyton decides to diversify her palate, starting with the pies that guests bring. Dense pages and lengthy pie descriptions may not interest all readers, but the group makes for a merry gathering; Nutter's digital illustrations are richly colored and inclusive, and Peyton's food particularities will resonate with many. A recipe for "Best-Ever Apple Pie" is included. Ages 4–8. *(Sept.)*

Dino-Thanksgiving (Dino-Holidays #3)

Lisa Wheeler, illus. by Barry Gott. Carolrhoda, $17.99 (32p) ISBN 978-1-5124-0318-3

In the latest installment of the Dino-Holidays series, a jaunty rhyme scheme ("Out back, little cousins play:/ Ping-pong, tag, and lawn croquet./ Raptor helps them fly a kite./ They're building up an appetite!") and bright digital illustrations depict dinosaurs coming together in chaotic community to observe Thanksgiving. The dinos, it turns out, celebrate much the same way humans do: visiting family; watching the annual Thanksgiving parade and football games; cooking and eating a variety of dishes, including "turkey, stuffing, pie, and more"; and gathering around a bonfire with their community. Colorful typography emphasizes the names of dinosaurs based on their species (Compy, Tricera, Pteros, etc.), though the full names of species are never clarified. While the holiday's grim origins are largely omitted, aside from a parade balloon wearing a Puritan's hat, the mention of football team "the Redscales" strikes a problematic note. Even so, this glimpse of prehistoric reptiles giving thanks should entertain young dinosaur fans. Ages 5–9. *(Sept.)*

All A-Board the Holiday Express

Five secular Christmas board books celebrate the season.

Yeti Baby!

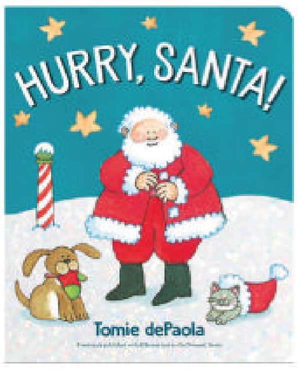
Elias Barks, illus. by Meg Hunt. Hazy Dell, $8.95 (12p) ISBN 978-1-948931-12-0

This fourth entry in the Hazy Dell Flap Books series stars Yeti Baby, a creature with two horns, light turquoise skin, a lavender raindrop nose, and a body covered in white whorls of sheeplike wool. Barks's prose is gently curious, with an emphasis on questions, as Yeti Baby traverses a snowy mountain and encounters friends along the way: "Who's gliding past/ the twinkling trees?" one page asks as the titular figure approaches a grove of pines with holiday lights. Beneath the flap on the opposite page, the answer is revealed: "Two gumdrop elves/ on candy cane skis!" Cartoony, candy-colored digital art by Hunt follows Yeti Baby climbing snowy boughs, taking a train ride, and heading home to a "cozy ice cave." A whimsically wintry lift-the-flap book. Ages up to 4. *(Oct.)*

Hurry, Santa!

Tomie dePaola. Little Simon, $7.99 (14p) ISBN 978-1-5344-6405-6

This board book from the late Caldecott Honor and Newbery Honor author-illustrator features Santa as he prepares for the big night. DePaola emphasizes the urgency of Santa's situation from the opening lines, "Hurry, Santa!" repeated throughout. Standing at the mirror in his Christmas-themed bathroom, Santa pulls on his outfit: over red long underwear go green-striped suspenders, red pants, and socks with a heart on them, then his classic outer garments. Just as Santa finishes suiting up and heads out the door, however, he realizes an urgency of a different kind ("Oh no! He's got to GO!"), resulting in a comedic shedding of bag, hat, coat, and mittens as he dashes back toward the bathroom. Characteristically warm drawings portray Santa and his animals—a cat, a dog, reindeer—with dot eyes and soft curves in gentle washes. A simple, resonant tale, assuring the littlest readers that even Santa must participate in everyday routines. Ages 1–5. *(Sept.)*



If You're Jolly and You Know It

Aly Fronis, illus. by Yi-Hsuan Wu. Little Bee, $8.99 (16p) ISBN 978-1-4998-1147-6

Following Fronis's 2016 Halloween interpretation, *If You're Spooky and You Know It*, this Christmas rendition of a classic song sets the stage in a sweetly colored winter wonderland. "If you're jolly/ and you know it,/ clap your hands," the text instructs, as Mr. and Mrs. Claus smile at each other, dance, and clap in a goldenrod-painted room with a Christmas tree. Subsequent pages feature elves and nutcrackers with varying skin tones and hair textures, as well as anthropomorphic ice-skating polar bears and reindeer wearing multicolored accessories. Though the song itself offers few surprises, Wu's cheerful illustrations—particularly a gray mouse in a pom-pom-bedecked beanie and striped scarf whom readers can follow through the pages—will keep toddlers entertained. Ages 2–5. *(Sept.)*

Peas on Earth

Jonny Marx, illus. by Lindsey Sagar. Silver Dolphin, $8.99 (12p) ISBN 978-1-64517-505-6

Though the title references a Christmas carol lyric summoning peace on Earth, this board book's narrative instead focuses on the subject of the pun: everyone's favorite spherical green legume. Circular cutouts and highlighted numbers characterize the countdown, which follows "five little festive peas" as they prepare for Christmas: assembling gifts and decorations, adorning a tree with ornaments and garlands, admiring the snowy landscape, and awaiting Santa on Christmas Eve. As time goes on, however, each pea becomes distracted by changing surroundings and falls away from the group: "One visits Santa's shop," Marx writes. Sagar's digital illustrations are subtly patterned, and, adding dimension to the spare narrative, each pea is distinguished by individual facial features. While the peas' disappearances and reappearances aren't always fully logical ("One small pea can't control his glee," for example, offers little explanation), the five peas' joyous reunion makes for a glad end. Ages 3–5. *(Sept.)*

Cocoa's Cranky Christmas: Can You Cheer Him Up?

Thomas Nelson, illus. by Beth Hughes. Thomas Nelson, $9.99 (20p) ISBN 978-1-4002-2194-3

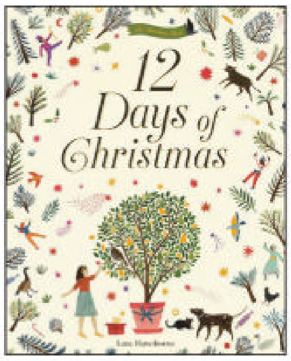
In this interactive board book, readers are asked to help cheer a grumpy pup named Cocoa, who is "missing his Christmas joy." He's a wide-eyed hound with dark brown ears, a brown mask, and an underbite, clothed for the occasion in a green sweater and reindeer antlers, and he looks none too delighted by the holiday season. Readers are invited to take various actions, including "making a silly face," taking Cocoa for a walk, clapping loudly, and even singing "Jingle Bells." But until the revelation of a certain gift, not one manages to help. The cartoony digital illustrations are set against a merry scarlet background, and close-ups of Cocoa's expressive face amplify the humor. Though the methods of engagement are inadvisable for real-life interactions with grumps of any sort—and may even fly in the face of holiday spirit—the comical narrative is likely to draw laughs. Ages 2–6. *(Oct.)*

FIVE GOLD RINGS

Two picture books interpret a classic Christmas song.

12 Days of Christmas (The Christmas Choir)

Lara Hawthorne. Frances Lincoln, $16.99 (32p) ISBN 978-0-7112-4540-2



Artist Hawthorne deftly weaves together traditional and contemporary strands in a nuanced interpretation of this 18th-century French carol, with detailed, richly hued naïf art created in gouache and edited digitally. Spotlighting a young woman's charming cottage and the lush surrounding countryside, the illustrations share the verse's cumulative nature, initially revealing the aggregate gifts she receives each day and, in subsequent spreads, reprising them in various combinations. Joining the narrator in each scene are her dog, cat, and resident mouse, whose frisky antics young readers will enjoy spotting. Hawthorne caps off this buoyant romp with a gleeful panorama that showcases the entire cast and offers a search-and-find challenge—while the narrator and her newly pictured true love, another woman, look on. Ages 2–5. *(Oct.)*

The Twelve Unicorns of Christmas

Timothy Knapman, illus. by Ada Grey. Aladdin, $17.99 (32p) ISBN 978-1-5344-8019-3

Breaking with tradition, Knapman turns the favorite cumulative Christmas carol into a countdown to Christmas Day. Preparations begin with zing as a unicorn-obsessed blond-haired girl announces: "On the first day of Christmas,/ my parents gave to me.../ 1 sparkling Christmas tree!/ And a real-life UNICORN!" Subsequent days outline activities enthusiastically undertaken with the unicorn, such as making "9 cards with unicorns on them!" for friends. By Christmas Eve, the girl's unicorn pal has lost some of his sparkle, and she makes a special request of Santa. The book's title teases the boisterous group of four-legged revelers who appear, ready to celebrate Christmas morning. Though typical seasonal activities are spotlighted, unicorn fans will delight in the narrator's unicorn-tastic wardrobe—pajamas, headbands, and even a dress adorned with the mythical horned creatures—as well as the plethora of rainbow and glitter details throughout. Final art not seen by *PW*. Ages 4–8. *(Sept.)*

that, whatever one's "own unique hue," "Christmas is YOU!/... It's your heartfelt compassion/ and your hope put in action./ It's your thrill for the little things." Though some references ("It's an Elvis song," "It's God within/ a baby's skin") seem aimed at parents rather than readers within the stated age range, lilting text teamed with Gamble's folk art–style paintings will keep younger readers engaged. Ages 3–7. *(Sept.)*

I Love You More Than Christmas

Ellie Hattie, illus. by Tim Warnes. Tiger Tales, $17.99 (32p) ISBN 978-1-68010-208-6

"I LOVE, LOVE, LOVE Christmas!" sums up Little Bear's feelings about the holiday, but he loves something else even more. Every time he tries to tell Mommy and Daddy Bear what it is, however, he's interrupted by exciting holiday preparations, such as Christmas cards arriving: "I love cards and packages, oh, yes, I do!/ But the thing that I love more than Christmas is—," Hattie writes. Little Bear's parents face the same challenge; whether it's Daddy Bear bursting through door with the tree or the oven timer signaling that a special treat is ready, no one can get a word in. Until, that is, the Bear clan shares a quieter happy moment at bedtime. Warnes's winsome images include lots of homey detail and depict a furry family overjoyed to decorate, bake, dance, and just be together. Ages 3–7. *(Sept.)*

Mistletoe: A Christmas Story

Tad Hills. Random House/Schwartz & Wade, $17.99 (40p) ISBN 978-0-593-17442-5

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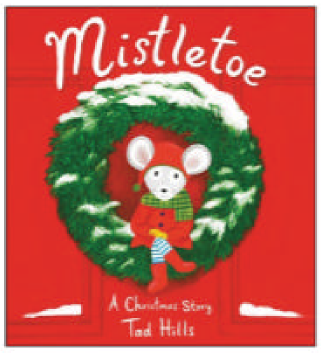

Hills introduces a memorable pair of characters who bring humor and thoughtfulness to their sweet celebration of Christmas. Like many great duos, Mistletoe the mouse and best friend Norwell the elephant are a study in contrasts. Mistletoe loves long walks in the snow, while cozy homebody Norwell thinks it's "too cold for this elephant." Convinced that Norwell should join her in appreciating the winter weather, especially now that Christmas is coming, Mistletoe jumps into action. Her fingers fly as she gathers her substantial yarn stash and knits during every spare minute—"while she makes cookies for Santa./ She even knits in the bath (which isn't easy)." On Christmas morning, she surprises Norwell with a thoughtful gift that's sure to keep him toasty outdoors. A final image of Norwell walking alongside Mistletoe in the great white expanse, sporting a spectacular hand-knit rainbow onesie, is not soon forgotten. Ages 3–7. *(Sept.)*

One Christmas Wish

M. Christina Butler, illus. by Tina Macnaughton. Tiger Tales, $17.99 (32p) ISBN 978-1-68010-212-3

Little Hedgehog and his red woolen hat, featured in Butler's and Macnaughton's tales *One Winter's Day* and *One Snowy Night*, return in this holiday-flavored friendship tale. During a tree-trimming party at his house, Little Hedgehog and his pals witness "a flurry of snow [flutter] past the window" and excitedly make plans to gather the next day—Christmas Eve—to help the baby mice build snow mice. Hopes are dashed when most of the white stuff has melted, but the pals embark on a snow hunt: "If we collect it in my hat, we'll have enough in no time!" Little Hedgehog and the other animals help others celebrate while discovering their own wintry fun along the way. The pairing of the text's warm notes and the familiar menagerie of sweet-faced critters in their woodland idyll showcase the cozy, giving feel of Christmas season. Ages 3–7. *(Sept.)*

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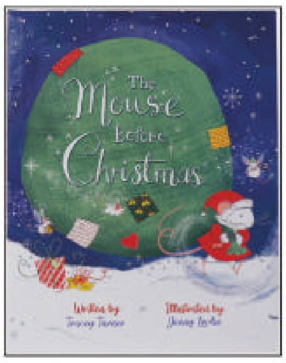
'Twere the Nights Before Christmas

Five picture books interpret Clement C. Moore's classic poem.

The Mouse Before Christmas

Tracey Turner, illus. by Jenny Løvlie. Sunbird, $10.99 (40p) ISBN 978-1-5037-5495-9



In Turner's homage to Clement C. Moore's "A Visit from St. Nicholas," a mouse is indeed stirring—Mouse Santa, who introduces readers to a mouse family via his Christmas Eve visit. As "the other mice dozed/ in their little mouse beds,/ While dreams full of cheesecake/ danced in their heads," squeaky urgings can be heard when Mouse Santa commands the eight rosy-cheeked beetles pulling his diminutive gift-laden sleigh. After a smooth landing, not on the roof but on the snowy ground, he squeezes through a crack in the wall "and into the mousehole,/ with presents for all"—including, of course, plenty of cheese. Løvlie's mouse-centric setting features a thimble vase, a thread spool side table, and tiny stockings lined up on one smallish bough, making for a cozy and festive Christmas Eve read. Ages 3–7. *(July)*

Comet the Unstoppable Reindeer

Jim Benton. Two Lions, $17.99 (40p) ISBN 978-1-5420-4347-2

A calamity-prone, wildly expressive Comet saves Christmas in this holiday romp, driven by Benton's vibrant ink and watercolor cartoons. When the reindeer is hurt breaking up a squabble between two overtired elves, the doctor gives him some unwelcome news: "No dashing, no dancing,/ your arm, it needs fixin'/ It will be a long time/ before you're prancing with Vixen." Left behind when Santa and his reindeer depart on Christmas Eve, Comet discovers Santa's forgotten bag of toys and a selfless letter from a boy requesting a special gift for his younger sister. In a knockabout sequence of comic mishaps, the well-intentioned reindeer valiantly flies off, hauling the massive sack across the globe. Though Benton's "Visit from St. Nicholas"-flavored verse feels directed more toward adults than kids ("when he heard the soft sound/ of a hernia start"), slapstick art will amuse readers of all ages. Ages 3–7. *(Sept.)*

'Twas the Night Before Christmas on the Farm

Craig Manning, illus. by Sumi Collina. Sourcebooks Wonderland, $10.99 (40p) ISBN 978-1-72820-625-7

Manning flavors Clement C. Moore's Christmas chestnut with barnyard imagery, recasting the poem from a curious lamb's point of view. As Santa's sleigh approaches, " 'It's a bird!' the lamb thought, for what else could fly?/ She'd never seen something else soar through the sky." She remains confused, comparing the man with the round belly, tractorlike sleigh, and horned "horses" to a farmer until she hears him say "ho, ho, ho." If the lamb's realization feels sudden, Collina's digital artwork—featuring sweetly snoozing animals, each with their own fittingly filled stocking—has a snow-filled, fantasy-flavored sheen that helps give this new variation a bit of the original's timeless feel. Ages 4–7. *(Sept.)*

★ The Night Before Christmas

Clement C. Moore, illus. by Loren Long. HarperCollins, $18.99 (40p) ISBN 978-0-06-286946-3

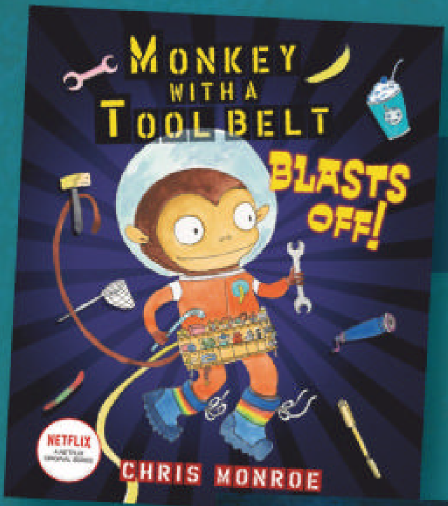
In detailed art rendered in acrylic paint and colored pencil, Long adds an intriguing dimension to Clement C. Moore's poem, visiting four families in different locales: a snow-covered farmhouse, a mobile home, a city apartment, and a tile-roofed house framed by palm trees. The artist's introductory note explains that he took "visual clues directly from the famous text" and renders "a little old driver" and other components on a diminutive scale, to winsome effect (in one scene, Santa's not much bigger than a group of household kitties). Readers see a diverse quartet of families asleep in their beds on Christmas Eve and view Santa soaring through the sky to deliver presents to each abode. The eclectic architecture, décor, holiday decorations, family configurations, and pet menageries shape a welcoming and inclusive portrait of Christmas Eve peace, wonder, and anticipation. Ages 4–8. *(Sept.)*

The Night Before Christmas

Clement C. Moore, illus. by Kai Würbs. Arctis, $17.95 (48p) ISBN 978-1-64690-005-3

Veering from the convivial, scene-centered graphic interpretation often associated with this classic, Würbs offers a sparer take, narrowing each scene to softly focused images that are more suggestive than representational. The poem's opening lines are accompanied by an image of a lone candle burning in a brass candleholder, and the sleigh's rooftop landing shows two shadowy reindeer heads emerging from behind a foregrounded stone chimney. Santa's visage is something of a mystery at first, his arrival down the chimney represented solely by sooty boot prints, and the top of his cap, surrounded by smoke, rendered alongside the description of his pipe. Building a sense of mystery until near the end, Würbs finally includes one fetching, full-frame portrait of a warmly smiling Santa. A solid choice for those in search of a sophisticated, minimalist artistic vision of Moore's verse. Ages 6–up. *(Oct.)*

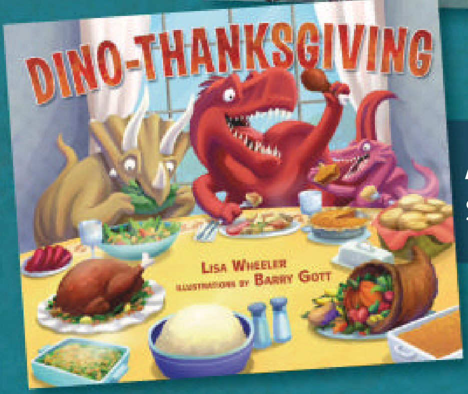
Picture Books Make Perfect Presents!



Ages 4-8
$17.99

The Most Beautiful Thing
Kao Kalia Yang
illustrated by Khoa Le

Ages 5-9
$17.99
★ Kirkus Reviews



Ages 5-9
$17.99

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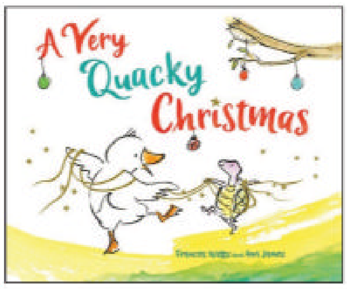
A Very Quacky Christmas

Frances Watts, illus. by Ann James. Doubleday, $17.99 (40p) ISBN 978-0-593-17377-0

Australian collaborators Watts and James underscore the rewards of ingenuity and sharing in this friendly tale about Samantha, a plucky duck who is determined to celebrate Christmas. Winding tinsel around reeds and hanging ornaments on a branch while singing, "We wish you a quacky Christmas," Samantha is undeterred by the grumblings of her turtle friend, Sebastian, who maintains that "Christmas is not for animals." Countering that the holiday is for anyone who likes to give and share, Samantha hatches a plan to make and deliver presents to animals the world over, aided by barnyard pals and a relenting Sebastian. They knit the sheep's wool into hats and scarves, bake cupcakes using the hens' eggs, weave daisy chains from the cows' field, and pile the gifts into a donkey's cart, which (after several failed attempts) the flapping duck propels into the air to complete her mission. Set against pastel backdrops, James's wispy, fluid pictures humorously—and affectingly—convey Samantha's spontaneity, optimism, and irrepressible holiday spirit. Ages 3–7. *(Sept.)*



A Dolly for Christmas

Kimberly Schlapman, illus. by Morgan Huff. Little, Brown, $18.99 (40p) ISBN 978-0-316-54296-8

Schlapman, a founding member of the band Little Big Town, writes from the heart in her debut children's book, in which a girl modeled on her daughter Daisy shares her parents' longing for a new baby to join their family. Frustrated when wishing and praying fail to bring her a sibling, Daisy decides "it was time to take action." With Christmas approaching, she mails Santa a letter pinpointing the sole item on her wish list. Her father urges her to be patient, reassuring her that "God will give us the perfect gift when the time is right." After an email affirms that the time has come, mirroring Schlapman's real-life story, the family welcomes a newborn, whom they name Dolly. Readers may well be confused by the infant's sudden appearance—though a background sign at one point reads "Adoption Agency Christmas Party," the child's provenance is never explicitly mentioned in the text—but Huff's candy-colored digital images underscore Daisy's sincerity, and a portrait of the real-life sisters adds sweetness to this earnest story. Ages 4–8. *(Oct.)*

The Little Bell That Wouldn't Ring

Heike Conradi, trans. from the German by David Henry Wilson, illus. by Maja Dusíková. NorthSouth, $17.95 (32p) ISBN 978-0-7358-4386-8

Dusíková's gauzy holiday scenes in a snowy village square bring to mind old-fashioned Christmas cards featuring all-white children, helping to tell the story of how a reluctant church tower bell finds its sound. The tower's three older residents—gold, silver, and bronze bells—have started practicing for Christmas, but they can't get the newest, smallest bell to join in. When basic encouragement doesn't work, tower regular Felidia the dove hears from a feathered friend that "nice words will help." So begins a sweeping search led by flocks of doves and pigeons to find phrases that might do the trick. After "morning sun," "cake crumbs," "Christmas pudding," "smelly cheese," and "I love you" all fall flat, a light from Bethlehem seen in the Christmas Eve sky proves the best catalyst. It delivers the special message that inspires the little bell to ring out loud and clear with a message of peace. Conradi's tale accessibly ties together secular and religious aspects of Christmas. Ages 4–8. *(Oct.)*

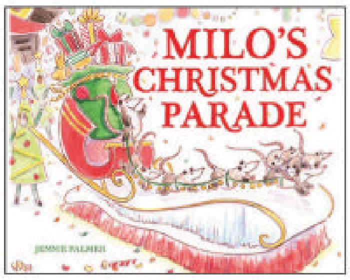
Little Mole's Christmas Gift

Glenys Nellist, illus. by Sally Garland. Beaming, $17.99 (32p) ISBN 978-1-5064-4875-6

In this latest installment of the Little Mole series, the title character—a gray, dot-eyed critter in a striped hat, green sweater, charcoal pants, and galoshes—discovers "the biggest, the best, the most beautiful mushroom he had ever seen," the optimal Christmas present for Mama. But as he trudges through the snow on his way back to the burrow with the white-spotted, red-capped mushroom, he encounters Little Squirrel, Little Mouse, and Little Chipmunk, who each have a need that Little Mole can fulfill—at the expense of his gift. Textured digital illustrations suggest crayon and colored pencil drawings; Little Mole and Mama are the only animals fully dressed and housed, but the other woodland creatures are expressive and anthropomorphic, too. While the conclusion may feel a tad abrupt, this compassionate Christmas fable emphasizes classic morals: that the heart behind a gift matters more than the gift itself. Ages 4–8. *(Oct.)*

Milo's Christmas Parade

Jennie Palmer. Abrams, $17.99 (40p) ISBN 978-1-4197-4499-0



Palmer, who has designed and built floats and balloons for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, imbues her hero, a scrappy little opossum, with similar aspirations in this festive tale. This year, Milo decides to "take matters into his own paws" and realize his dream of joining the Christmas parade. In bustling mixed-media illustrations that incorporate diverting details, the author-illustrator shows Milo, assisted by his familial passel of possums, determinedly building a float bed (tail wrapped around tools) and trimming his costume (a pincushion perched on his head). On parade day, his float is upended when it gets caught in ropes tethering a helium balloon, but Milo springs back into action, on the fly constructing a sturdier, sleeker model that "rocketed down the road on pure passel power." Meshing Christmas, parade, and animal themes, Palmer gives triple kid appeal to her festively hued story, which culminates in well-deserved triumph for Milo. Ages 4–8. *(Oct.)*

★ The Christmas Barn

John Churchman and Jennifer Churchman. Little Bee, $18.99 (48p) ISBN 978-1-4998-1019-6

In this photographic picture book, the authors of the Sweet Pea & Friends series reveal how they transformed a 150-year-old tree felled by lightning into a barn as a

Holiday Picks for Kids!

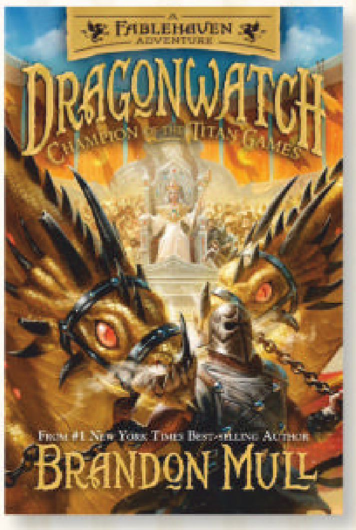
Ming's Christmas Wishes
Written by Susan L. Gong • Illustrated by Masahiro Tateishi

Ming's Christmas Wishes
Susan L. Gong
Illustrated by Masahiro Tateishi
9781629727790/$18.99/Picture Book (Sept)

★ "Growing up in the 1930s, [Ming] faces discrimination at school for being Chinese, and displeasure at home for being too American. Her wise father shows her how to honor her heritage while embracing new customs. Heartwarming. Based on real events." —*Foreword Reviews*, starred

"Illustrations have lovely warmth, imparting a mythical quality to the tale." —*Booklist*

"It's Gong's depiction of the long arc of a bittersweet history in the context of the strength of human character that readers will remember. A thoughtful take on Chinese American history." —*Kirkus*

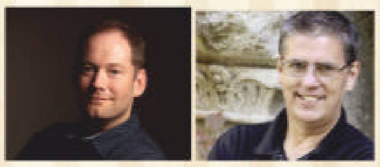

A Fablehaven Adventure
Dragonwatch
Champion of the Titan Games
From #1 New York Times Best-selling Author
Brandon Mull

Dragonwatch series
Champion of the Titan Games
Brandon Mull
NYT #1 bestselling series!
Ruled by a powerful Giant Queen, enslaved dragons fight in gladiator-style battles against giants!
9781629727882/$19.99/HC
MG Fantasy (Oct)

The Lost Wonderland Diaries
J. Scott Savage

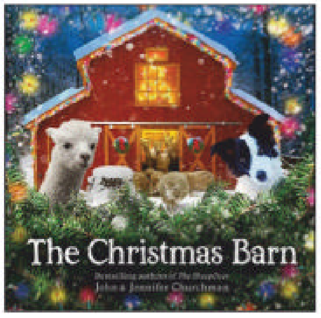
The Lost Wonderland Diaries
J. Scott Savage
A portal to Wonderland leads to familiar, but monstrous creatures!
"Savage pays homage to Carroll's world with imagination adding his own ingenious twists. Offers a message of empowerment and self-love. A fun and clever return to Wonderland." —*Kirkus*
9781629727868/$17.99/HC
MG Fantasy (Sept)

Middle Grade Fantasy: Meet the Authors webinar
Brandon Mull and J. Scott Savage
Oct. 5th 1pm/CT
Free event! Register: booklistonline.com/webinars



SHADOW MOUNTAIN PUBLISHING

Christmas gift for the animals on their Vermont farm. The heartwarming chronicle includes age-appropriate, often onomatopoeically rendered details, as the tree is chopped into logs and milled into boards ("Whir, whir, risp, rasp") that are used for the structure's frame, walls, roof, and doors. The indisputable stars of the book are the handsome animals themselves, each introduced by name and all clearly beloved family members—many will be familiar to readers of the Churchmans' other books. Seen in crisp, closely focused pictures, they watch over the construction with palpable friendliness and curiosity ("What can it be? What can it be?"). Perhaps most endearing are the stately alpacas, one of whom, aptly named Joy, gives birth after the animals are ushered into their new home just before Christmas. An affectionate, informative, and thoroughly moving holiday tale. Ages 4–8. *(Sept.)*



Meerkat Christmas

Emily Gravett. Simon & Schuster, $19.99 (32p) ISBN 978-1-5344-7679-0

In Africa's Kalahari Desert, a meerkat clan is excitedly preparing for Christmas, except for Sunny, who dons a Santa cap, packs a sack, and "sets off to find somewhere more Christmassy"—as showcased in a magazine he consults. Traveling the world, magazine in hand, he deems each spot less than ideal. On Christmas Eve, while visiting a mouse clan in their cozy, grandly decorated digs, as a sumptuous feast is served and snow falls outside, Sunny decides that the scenario is almost perfect—but not quite. That night, after Santa discovers a postcard Sunny wrote to his family, he realizes what the meerkat is lacking, and he delivers Sunny (festively gift-wrapped) back to the desert, where his family happily welcomes him home. Gravett's watercolor and pencil illustrations embellish the story, as do the tidbits readers can find under various flaps throughout. Ages 4–8. *(Sept.)*

Peppermint Post

Bruce Hale, illus. by Stephanie Laberis. HarperCollins, $17.99 (32p) ISBN 978-0-06-284717-1

"Neither snow, nor ice, nor weather not so nice can stop Peppermint Post." That's Santa's glowing assessment of the busiest post office in the world, where all his mail is processed by polar bear Postmaster Buck Growlersson and his penguin crew. After millions of letters filled with Christmas wishes have "rocketed through the super-sorter, with a ZIP,/ and a BIP,/ and a FWIPPETY-FWIP," and requested gifts are en route with Santa on Christmas Eve, Buck realizes that one girl's note, gone astray, has missed the cut. He and the penguins shift into overdrive to get the girl's wish to Santa. Though the text perhaps undersells the postal service's intricacies ("Flying a sleigh wasn't nearly as easy as running a post office"), the merry urgency of the Peppermint Post's pace—and Buck's antic overtime mission—are captured in Laberis's kinetic illustrations. Jewel tones accented with bright white—Buck's fur, Santa's beard, a snowy rooftop—in a combination of spot illustrations and larger scenes sustain the frenzied-feeling motion. Ages 4–8. *(Sept.)*

Santa Baby

Jonathan Stutzman, illus. by Heather Fox. Holt, $18.99 (48p) ISBN 978-1-250-25561-7

In this sprightly caper, Santa is feeling no holiday spirit and his body aches ("Ho, Ho, Oww"), so he summons the "magic of Christmas" to make him young again. When he morphs from an old man into a baby, the elves frantically test his Santa skills, and he fails miserably—and comically. He refuses to pop down chimneys, opens rather than delivers packages, and chews his list, twice. But thinking of the children he'll disappoint if he doesn't make his Christmas Eve rounds, he dons his "big-boy cap," climbs into his "safety-approved sleigh-seat" and takes off. After stumbling, he "hurried down the chimney in fright" (a riff on the 1950s song with which this volume shares a name), but encounters a girl whose kindness rekindles the "beauty and wonder of Christmas" and he's restored to his jolly old self. The developmental logic is iffy—how does Santa Baby understand the global stakes when he can't even say "Ho Ho Ho"?—but Fox's bustling digital cartoons and the elves' attempts to communicate with their blathering infant boss amplify the tale's blithe humor. Ages 4–8. *(Sept.)*

Santa.com

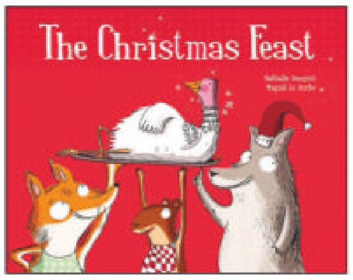
Russell Hicks and Matt Cubberly, illus. by Ryley Garcia. Familius, $17.99 (32p) ISBN 978-1-64170-289-8

What if Santa modernized his operations? Hicks and Cubberly imagine that scenario in this tale about young elf Yo-Yo, who is just starting out at Santa.com. On the eve of Yo-Yo's first day on the assembly line, where he loads delivery drones with children's Christmas gifts via the push of a red button, his grandfather regales him with favorite stories of Christmases past—the days when Santa loaded a sack with elf-made toys and delivered them himself via reindeer-powered sleigh. So, when Cyber Scrooge hacks Santa.com, tripping an alarm and threatening Christmas, Yo-Yo enlists a team—and seeks out Santa himself—for a back-to-basics rescue mission. Garcia fills the gift fulfillment center with looming tech—drones and alarms—that conveys a harrowing surveillance state vibe. Though the cast of wide-eyed characters eventually celebrates the plan's success, the disjointed story-within-a-story can feel a bit unclear. Ages 4–8. *(Sept.)*

The Christmas Feast

Nathalie Dargent, illus. by Magali Le Huche. Eerdmans, $17.99 (32p) ISBN 978-0-8028-5537-4

In this droll spin on the prey-outwitting-predator premise, Fox snatches Turkey to be a Christmas feast for him and his burrowmates, Wolf and Weasel. The bossy bird immediately takes charge, insisting that they fatten her up before eating her ("Good grief, everybody knows that! Was this their first Christmas? Was this their first feast?" Dargent writes). Ashamed, the three friends meekly follow Turkey's orders, and the quartet gets on splendidly until Christmas Eve, when she unnerves her new friends by slyly asking how they intend to cook her. "I would like to



be flambéed," she announces before giving her panicked friends an out, suggesting that they fatten her up until *next* Christmas, when the feast will be "even better." Le Huche's snappy pictures capture the brood's lopsided dynamics with panache, right up to a final image: of Turkey reading *The Best Recipes for Stuffed Wolves, Foxes, and Weasels*. Ages 4–8. *(Aug.)*

Robin's Christmas Journey

Maya Onodera. Clavis, $18.95 (40p) ISBN 978-1-60537-577-9

Over the mountain and through the snow, to Grandpa's house he'll go—such is the plotted course for Robin the mouse's solo holiday trip. Determined to spend Christmas with his grandfather, who lives on the other side of the mountain, Robin fills his backpack with clothes and a gift, grabs a sleeping bag, and sets off. Following rugged terrain, he encounters rough weather and a hungry falcon, and he crashes on his homemade snowboard before even marking the halfway point. More near-calamities arise, but intrepid Robin treks on, finally arriving at Grandpa's empty-handed. Happily, the elder mouse assures his grandson that the best gift of all is not the one that got away but Robin's own arrival. With snowy woodland scenes and a chipper protagonist up for any challenge, Onodera brings readers along on a suspenseful ride to a welcoming destination filled with Christmas spirit. Ages 4–9. *(Sept.)*

Ming's Christmas Wishes

Susan L. Gong, illus. by Masahiro Tateishi. Shadow Mountain, $18.99 (48p) ISBN 978-1-62972-779-0

Inspired by family stories, Gong looks at Christmas through the eyes of Ming, the oldest child of immigrants in 1930s Northern California. Unwelcome in her school's Christmas choir, presumably because she's Chinese, Ming requests a Christmas tree at home, only to face Mama's disapproval because it's "not Chinese." Feeling unmoored, Ming ponders her place in the world. But a trip with her compassionate father into the snowy mountains—and a conversation with her grandfather's old friends—soon transforms Ming's perspective, as she learns about the significance of pine trees in her family's culture and encounters a generations-old altar left by Chinese miners, a powerful marker of immigrants' resilience in America. Gong's dialogue-heavy prose is lyrical and deeply sympathetic (about the mountain: "Here, he said, we are not foreigners. Here we are men, a small part of nature's greatness"). Intricate, warmly washed interiors and expansive landscapes by Tateishi enchant, conveying viewpoints from a variety of angles that effectively highlight Ming's varying emotions. A historical holiday story that poignantly explores identity and belonging from a less-seen perspective. Ages 5–6. *(Sept.)*

Norman's Gift

Michelle Olson. Bellie Button, $18.95 (34p) ISBN 978-1-7323707-3-9

This follow-up to Olson's 2018 debut, *Norman*, continues the adventures of the eponymous wire-limbed red button and his best friend, Freddy Teddy, for whom Norman serves as a nose. Despite their inseparability during the day, the duo must part at night, since "Freddy's snoring had become an unbearable problem for Norman." One night, Norman overhears Freddy telling the other toys he has already bought the "best Christmas present" for Norman. With Christmas on the horizon, the button springs into reciprocal action—but when his efforts to buy a "huge and expensive" present, acquire a smaller gift, and bake a cake for his ursine friend fail in succession, he must find a different way to show his appreciation. Photo illustrations, embellished with dollhouse miniatures and digital flourishes such as thought bubbles and Norman's wide eyes, provide an engrossing button's-eye view of the world. A fun holiday sequel with an evergreen message. Ages 5–8. *(Self-published)*

Holiday Comics

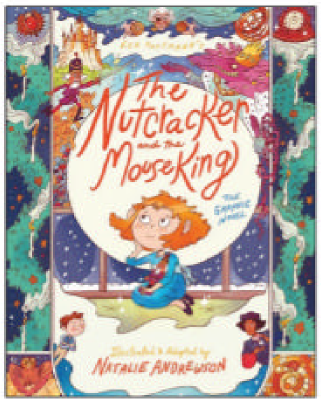
Happy Narwhalidays (Narwhal and Jelly #5)

Ben Clanton. Tundra, $12.99 (76p) ISBN 978-0-7352-6251-5

His tusk-tooth and scarf both sporting red and white stripes, holiday-loving Narwhal is "feeling festive" in the fifth installment of the graphic novel series starring two earnest aquatic pals. Despite Narwhal's holiday enthusiasm, jellyfish Jelly has no interest in "the freezing season" and longs for warmer waters ("Humph-bug," he grumps). Narwhal cheers up Jelly ("a bit") with a bowl of warm waffle pudding, and a present with his name on it also boosts his spirits. But Jelly worries that he has nothing for Narwhal, who he assumes is the gift giver. Through spare mixed-media pictures and an energetic, wordplay-steeped narrative in six short sections, Clanton sorts out Jelly's conundrum and introduces a special holiday visitor, the Merry Mermicorn, a mermaid-unicorn hybrid who, Narwhal says, is "completely mer-aculous!" "Cool facts" about marine life are sprinkled throughout this buoyant tale. Ages 6–9. *(Sept.)*

The Nutcracker and the Mouse King

E.T.A. Hoffmann, illus. by Natalie Andrewson. First Second, $18.99 (144p) ISBN 978-1-5964-3681-7



Andrewson renders an immersive reimagining of the classic Christmas tale in 14 chapters. In Germany, Marie and Fritz Stahlbaum await Christmas Eve and their godfather Drosselmeier, a "mechanically minded" man who each year brings them handmade gifts. Discovering a nutcracker beneath the tree, Marie fervently guards it, first from battle-minded Fritz, then, in a series of nightmarish clashes, from a terrifying Mouse King who appears to Marie after midnight. Occasional captions guide readers through Marie's experiences over several nights, while a secondary fairy tale arc—of the human Princess Pirlipat and revenge-obsessed mouse Lady Mouserinks—adds context to Marie's story. In whimsical full-color art that employs thin lines and bright colors, Andrewson fills each page with measured revelations that mimic the ballet's drama—the Christmas tree's appearance, the clock striking midnight, the arrival of the mice and the many-headed Mouse King—while centering Marie's bravery and grit. A captivating, otherworldly adaptation for old fans and new. Ages 6–10. *(Sept.)* ■

“It turns out that an awful lot of e-book piracy could be abated if courts applied the DMCA as Congress originally intended.”

Fighting E-book Piracy

The Authors Guild’s CEO offers insight on how to battle book pirates

By Mary Rasenberger

How often do you worry about your paycheck getting stolen? Probably not too often, because we have strong laws that deter and punish theft of money, banking systems in place to protect you and track down the thief, and law enforcement that will step in to help.

But authors don’t have this security when their royalties are siphoned off by e-book pirates. Day after day, authors find stolen copies of their books on multiple platforms and pirate websites, and there is nothing they can do about it. The Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), the law that regulates copyright liability on the internet, allows authors, publishers, and copyright holders to send takedown notices in response to copyright infringement. Pirate sites, however, whose operations are usually based outside the U.S., ignore the takedown notices, and companies that provide online services in the U.S. (such as web hosting services, search engines, social media sites, and user-generated content sites like YouTube) take down only the e-books posted at the specific URLs listed in a given notice, leaving other pirated copies online and doing little to prevent new ones from being posted, even by the same users. As a result, piracy flourishes unabated, diverting income from authors’ pockets to those of pirates.

Federal copyright lawsuits can be brought against those who fail to comply with takedown notices or are otherwise ineligible for the DMCA safe harbors, but they are expensive, complicated cases, requiring sophisticated counsel with the know-how and tools to sue bad actors whose identities and locations are often obscure. Very few authors have the means to bring these suits. And a successful lawsuit does not always shut down the pirate operations, as we saw in Elsevier’s lawsuit against LibGen and SciHub. Despite a $15 million judgment, they remain among the top piracy sites in the world and are widely used by U.S. students and others to download books for free.

In July, the Authors Guild organized a lawsuit against a notorious Ukraine-based network of piracy sites called Kiss Library. The named plaintiffs in the suit are 12 Authors Guild members, as well as Amazon Publishing and Penguin Random House, whose generous financial support made the lawsuit possible. Kiss Library, which operates Kissly.net, Libly.net, Cheap-Library.com, and other websites, illegally sells pirated e-books at very cheap prices. Its sites were designed to look like legitimate online bookstores, complete with elaborate descriptions of how they help authors, while they actually exploit authors by drawing unwary readers away from legitimate, royalty-earning copies. Going into the lawsuit, we were fully aware of the costs and challenges, including the improbability of getting restitution for authors, let alone delivering sturdy consequences for the sites’ operators. Our primary goals were simple: to shut down the criminal enterprise and to raise awareness about the challenges that authors and publishers face in combating rampant online piracy.

Our lawsuit against Kiss Library illustrates the importance of cooperation from third parties in fighting piracy, particularly that of internet service providers (ISPs), payment processing services, and other utilities that pirate sites rely on to operate. An earlier temporary restraining order directed domain registrars to disable Kiss Library’s domains, taking the sites offline, and ordered payment processors Kiss Library used to freeze their assets. Two weeks ago, the court converted the restraining order into a preliminary injunction, allowing our lawyers to obtain and investigate records relating to the individuals involved in operating the site from their ISPs. Additional sites that were distributing pirated comics and cartoons as part of the larger Kiss Library scheme have also been identified and disabled as a result of discovery and the injunction.

It turns out that an awful lot of e-book piracy could be abated if courts applied the DMCA as Congress originally intended: to incentivize ISPs, search engines, web hosting providers, and other online services to actually cooperate with copyright owners by disabling access to known pirate sites and preventing uploads of content that has been identified as pirated. But courts have interpreted this law in a way that gives these services safe harbor for doing little besides removing individual posts in response to specific takedown requests, allowing them to leave other obviously pirated copies on their services and new copies to be immediately posted to replace those that were taken down. As a result, the publishing industry continues to endure billions in lost sales each year, and millions in royalties are robbed from authors. The Authors Guild has been lobbying for reforms to the DMCA that would realign it with Congress’s goals.

We need a law that incentivizes search engines, ISPs, and the like to act rather than sit back and profit from piracy. It’s about time we changed the way we regulate online activity to align with our most basic laws and ethics. ■

Mary Rasenberger is the CEO of the Authors Guild.

BOOKS

Playful Reading

"Together, we have taken Playful Reading to heart and developed a book program that injects a LEGO® playfulness into every title from the fiction and picture books we are now publishing again to new activity and novelty formats that you've all come to expect from AMEET."
Piotr Modlinski, CEO and founder of AMEET

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